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ISSN 1753-1217



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Picture: MICK GELL

■ BY ANNA WHITE

MAIDSTONE council is injecting £50,000 into the town and its potential star athletes to ensure they benefit during the London 2012 Olympics.

Cabinet member for Leisure and Culture, Cllr Brian Moss has allocated £15,000 for a sponsorship website, which will bring in funding and support for potential sporting stars.

Mr Moss said: "The website will be offering companies the chance to adopt an athlete or team, testimonials from the businesses, information on successful sponsorship stories, athlete profiles, details on companies which have provided sponsorship and reasons why they should sponsor."

Martin Brockman, pictured, a 21-year-old decathlete, is a Maidstone sportsman hoping to benefit from the site and be part of the town's legacy.

Martin, from Medway and Maidstone Athletics Club, is seeking sponsorship to help pay for travel costs, food, drink, accommodation and equipment.



Clr Moss added: "Martin is a prime example of the kind of athlete we are hoping to attract to our sponsorship website."

"We are hoping businesses in the town will view his profile online and sponsor him. It is a great platform for building a legacy to 2012."

"At the Youth Sport Achievement Awards there will be a number of promising sports

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

TRADITIONALLY GOOD FUN

Nine-year-old Emma Worsfold, and pal Laura Horley, eight, have a game of marbles in the playground.

They are pupils at Sutton Valence Preparatory School, where teachers are reintroducing traditional games from the past in a bid to reinforce traditional standards, respect and behaviour.

Deputy head Alexia Bracewell says it has been proven active playtimes with choices reduce bullying and bad behavior. To bring this positive method into the school the playground has been divided into a number of zones to suit the youngster's mood, ranging from quiet and crazy, to balls and WOW.

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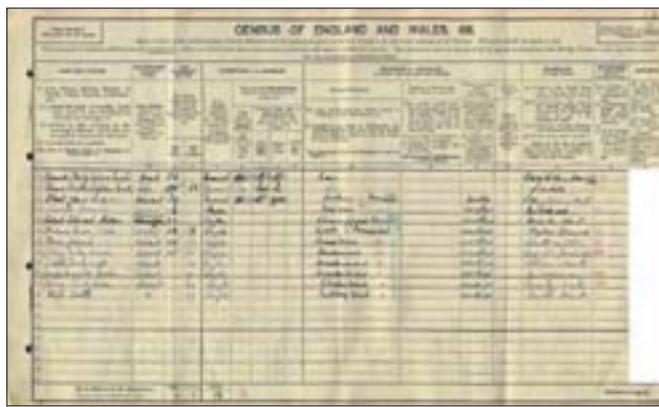
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HISTORY LESSON: Information from the 1911 Census is now available on the internet

Take a fascinating trip back in time as census goes online

■ BY ANNA WHITE

CURIOS residents and historians can delve into records containing details of millions of people living in England during 1911.

The 1911 Census gives researchers a rare insight into what life was like 98 years ago, by offering access to information for the 36 million people in England and Wales who were recorded on the night of Sunday, April 2, 1911.

Last week, 27 million people's records were posted on the census website for public viewing.

The remaining nine million records of people from England, Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, as well as the naval and overseas military records, will be added shortly.

From £6.95 for 60 credits, residents can view the online documents to find out who lived in their house before them, how many servants a household had or information about their ancestors.

Each record shows the occupant's name, addresses, place of birth, occupation, age and marital status.

The website, created by The National Archives and findmypast.com, shows Cornwallis Philip Wykeham-Martin

and his wife Anna lived in Leeds Castle, Maidstone, during 1911.

In 1911, Mr Wykeham-Martin would have been 56, and Mrs Wykeham-Martin would have been 58. They had been married for 34 years.

Both outlived the estimated life expectancy for that era, which was 54 for women and 50 for men.

The household transcript gives an insight into life in the historic castle during that year by listing all ten members of staff, noting their relationship to the head of the house, Mr Wykeham, as his servant.

Mr and Mrs Wykeham-Martin lived in Leeds Castle along with a footman, odd man, chauffeur, cook, ladies domestic servant, two housemaids, a kitchen maid and a scullery maid.

History shows the Wykeham-Martin family owned the castle from 1821 to 1924, when they were forced to sell the property to Lady Baillie, to pay off debts.

Oliver Morley, director of customer and business development at The National Archives, said the digitising of the 1911 census was a "major achievement".

He said: "This remarkable record is available online to researchers and family historians."

"The 1911 census is a poignant reflection of how different life was in early 20th century Britain, before the Great War."

yourmaidstone NEWS IN BRIEF

Jail for knife attack on homeless victim

LEE David Harper has been jailed for three-and-a-half years for slashing a homeless man across the face with a knife.

The 34-year-old, who also goes by the name of Chamberlain, lashed out at his victim on a riverside pathway in Maidstone in May.

The 42-year-old man suffered a deep seven-inch cut across his face, causing massive blood loss.

Detective Inspector Susan Harper of the Maidstone Area Crime Unit said: "It is only thanks to the skill and quick reactions of the paramedics and then the surgical teams at Maidstone and East Grinstead who treated the victim that saved his life."

Air your concerns to council committee

MAIDSTONE council is open to suggestions for problems and issues they should look at throughout the year.

The council's Overview and Scrutiny committee will be taking on board people's thoughts as to what needs to be addressed during 2009-10.

Previous issues included mental health services, diverse communities, planning, road safety, housing, public toilets and the council's budget.

Email osc@maidstone.gov.uk, call 01622 602620 or write to Maidstone Borough Council Scrutiny team, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ.

Show to help pupils enjoy perfect prom

SCHOOL leavers can find everything they need for the perfect ball all under one roof at Kent's First Ever Prom Show.

On Saturday, February 7 and 8, The Hop Farm Family Park will be filled with all the prom must-haves.

There will be professionally choreographed fashion shows featuring clothing, shoes and accessories, expert hair and make-up demonstrations, limousine hire, and companies specialising in suit and dinner jacket hire.

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Search is on to find high street visionary

■ BY ANNA WHITE

A MULTI-MILLION pound competition has been launched to find a top architect who will transform Maidstone's High Street into a must see destination.

Maidstone council have joined forces with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to turn the run-down High Street into a bold, imaginative and an inspirational piece of public space.

Cabinet member for regeneration, Cllr Malcolm Greer, who is behind the international competition, said: "This is a fantastic day for Maidstone and Maidstone council.

"We are going for vitality and we aim to raise people's awareness of the county town of Kent as a place people want to come to.

"I am confident about this project otherwise I wouldn't be putting my head on the line."

The High Street runs from the Mall Chequers, alongside Bank Street to the River Medway. One of the main aims of the £4 million project is to be able to view the river from the High Street.

Mr Greer added: "This project will open up Maidstone and the river, which is terribly unused, and the All Saints heritage which is brilliant."

The makeover will take inspiration from the likes of Vienna, Paris, Barcelona and the newly-designed New Road in Brighton, which is now the fourth most popular place in the whole city.



JOINING HANDS: Malcolm Greer and RIBA representative Robert Jarman are leading the search for high street architect

Mr Greer said: "In the new high street pedestrians will be king. There will be a feel of openness and traffic will be slowed down, which will create a visual impact between the pedestrian and the driver."

He continued to say the improvements will also be good for the current economy and hopefully bring in more visitors.

He said: "It will attract businesses to Maidstone, which will make jobs, and we have buckets of houses coming in the next few years and we need to ensure we have the jobs."

The competition was officially launched yesterday (January 13) and up to five of the best designs will be going out on public display and consultation in April.

Registrations close on February 26, and the deadline for stage one submissions is 2pm on March 5.

The winner is due to be announced in late May or early June.

People can keep up-to-date with the High Street International Design competition by visiting <http://highstreet.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/>.

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Your LOCAL TV ONLINE



Malcom Greer talks about the benefits to our town

Estate agents stay upbeat over future

ESTATE agents say they are beginning to see a rise in people regaining confidence in Maidstone's housing market where prices have fallen by around 20 per cent in a year.

Your Move area sales director Oliver Blake believes although there has been an increase in buyers, they are now more aware of the market.

He said: "I think the buyers we have now are more serious, that's the key difference."

Tracey Keithson, senior sales negotiator at Ward and Partners, said: "People still have the confidence when it comes to good buys."

Connell's Maidstone branch letting manager, Mark Fitzgerald, added in the last couple of months he had seen an increase in people wanting to rent.

- For full report on Maidstone and every area in the county visit www.kentnews.co.uk/readmore
- And why upsizing may be cheaper than you think, see Property page 51

Coaching our youngsters to Olympics

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

stars and we can use this event to let people know about the site and what it will be able to offer."

The remaining £34,000 will be used for the development of facilities, and £1,000 will go to Pegasus Gymnastics Centre for the visit from the Slovenian National Team.

Cllr Moss added: "The biggest chunk of the money will go to a pre-games training camp at Sutton Valence Athletics Track, a Maidstone Leisure Centre Beach Volleyball facility, Pegasus Gymnastics Centre and other sports clubs and events showing a legacy for 2012."

A panel is to be set up with Cllr Moss, the sports, play and youth development manager and the arts development manager to consider applications for funding and to allocate the money appropriately.

In conjunction with the Youth Sport Achievement Awards on January 30 at Mote Hall, Maidstone council's Sports, Play and Youth Development Team is offering limited funding to give support to coaches wishing to further their qualifications. Performance Coach Education Grants will be awarded to coaches who are qualified at level 2 or above.

Croatian authorities send child abuser back to pay for his crimes



EXTRADITED: William Stevenson

Unit in Maidstone said: "I would also like to thank the victims for their courage in helping to testify against this man, as they still had to endure the ordeal of a full trial, despite Mr Stevenson's absence."

Judge Lawson also handed Stevenson an extra six-month sentence to run concurrently for breaching his bail.

Detective Sergeant Richard Dicker of Kent Police's Public Protection



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Bone cancer claims life of UKIP's Sir Dai Llewellyn

WELSH socialite Sir Dai Llewellyn died of bone cancer last week, aged 62.

Sir Llewellyn, brother of celebrity gardener Roddy Llewellyn, who stood in elections for the UKIP Party was being cared for at the Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital. His former wife Vanessa Hubbard and his daughters Olivia, 28, and Arabella, 25, were at his bedside when he died.

He had been transferred to the hospital from a hospice six weeks ago.

Award-winning charity is in need of new helpers

A MAIDSTONE charity is in desperate need of volunteers to help them work with the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

The award-winning Hi Kent charity are offering to train people to become volunteers in the Maidstone area, covering the town centre, Barming, Coxheath and Staplehurst.

To find out more information call Hi Kent's volunteer co-ordinator Jill Townsend, on 01622 691151 or send an email enquiries@hikent.org.uk.

Glazing firm found guilty of 'poisoning' family's son

A COURT has ordered Kent-based firm Superglazing Ltd to pay £9,000 after putting a family at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The company built a conservatory at a home in Maidstone which obstructed the external flue of the gas boiler. This led to a build of carbon monoxide and resulted in the family's 12-year-old son being hospitalised.

Superglazing Ltd pleaded guilty at Maidstone Magistrates' Court was fined £4,500 and ordered to pay £4,500 court fees.

Recruitment firm comes good for burgled school

YOUNGSTERS at a burgled school will soon be back online thanks to a Rochester-based recruitment agency.

Bosses at Education Sense are set to donate three laptops to pupils at Oldborough Manor Community College, Loose, to replace the computers stolen by thieves last month.

Education Sense, based in The Fairway, provides teachers within the primary, secondary and special needs sectors, including care homes and hospitals.

Strictly dance craze is good for the 'sole'

Teacher of star from TV hit sees increase in pupils

■ BY ANNA WHITE

BALLROOM dancing is enjoying a huge resurgence thanks to Strictly Come Dancing and for many people it really is life changing – one couple even saved their marriage thanks to their new interest.

The BBC One show, which pulled in more than 12 million views for the 2008 final, seems to have inspired people to take it up themselves and who better to turn to than one of the show's star's own dance teacher?

Margaret Preedy, 45, who runs her own dancing studio in Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, is the master behind the show's professional dancer James Jordan.

Miss Preedy began teaching Mr Jordan when he was 11 years old and last year she worked closely with him and his wife Ola, who is also a professional dancer on the show, on their choreography for the 2008 series.

She said: "Both James and Ola came to the studio to do their choreography for the show, so it was great to watch the dances I had gone through with them and then to hear the judges' comments.

"The show has definitely made more people interested in ballroom dancing, especially adults, which is great for us as we have seen an increase in students.

"We have about 500 adults at the moment.

"At other dance schools couples have to dance with other people rather than their partner, but here we want them to."

One of Miss Preedy's teaching assistants Hayley Pooke, 26, added: "We have had couples come to us who are on the verge on divorce, but they have found something in dancing and stayed together – it's kind of like marriage therapy.

"Another couple met in one of the classes and



HAPPY FEET: Margaret (top left) taught Strictly Come Dancing's husband and wife James (above) and Ola (far left)

Margaret was actually invited to their wedding."

It's not just couples who are turning to dance in a bid to improve their life. Miss Preedy has seen a lot of troubled youngsters come to her and turn their lives around.

She added: "We have had a lot of troubled kids come in, but they have enjoyed dancing so much it gives them something to focus on and stops them from hanging around on the streets."

Focus

Billy Smallwood, 15, has been dancing since she was eight years old, she said: "I used to get bullied and was really shy, but I gained confidence through dancing and I was able to stand up for myself."

"Dancing helped me stop worrying and it was just something I lived for."

Lucia Knight, also 15, has been dancing from the age of three, but her hobby also helped her through the death of her father

who was killed in a road traffic incident in April last year, and her grandfather who died in December.

She said: "Dancing helped me get through it all as it gave me something to focus on. I've got good friends there and they really helped me just by acting normal which is what I wanted. Margaret was great as well she used to text me to make sure I was okay."

"I would definitely recommend taking up dancing to anyone who has gone through anything similar because it gives you a hobby and something to take your mind off everything."

Margaret Preedy Dance Studios offers classes and private lessons for adults and children in ballroom, Latin American and the newly launched danceercise.

For more information visit www.margaret-preedy.co.uk or call 01622 688212 or 07973 858796.

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Man at heart of Stones rollercoaster years dies

THE former Maidstone United chairman Jim Thompson has lost his battle against cancer.

Mr Thompson died at The Heart of Kent Hospice, Aylesford, on Friday morning, aged 75.

The controversial former football club chairman, who was also the chief executive of the town's chamber of commerce, was in charge of Maidstone United for 22 years.

Thompson was with the club when they were promoted to the Football League in 1989.

Club bosses gambled and lost after they decided to sell their ground and spend £400,000 on land without planning permission for a new stadium.

The club had been sharing a home pitch with

■ BY ANNA WHITE

Dartford Football Club – where Mr Thompson was also on the board – when they submitted a planning application for a new ground on the land at Hollingbourne.

But Maidstone council planning department refused permission and the mounting financial difficulties meant it went bust. All the players went up for sale.

After leaving his post he went on initially to help current Stones chairman Paul Bowden-Brown build up the club that exists today, first known as Maidstone Invicta in 1992, now Maidstone United.

Geordie-born Mr Thompson also had a turbu-

lent relationship his previous employer The Kent Messenger Group where he was managing director.

He amazed former colleagues when he reportedly banned KM staff from attending any Maidstone games after he deemed a report by them as unfair. His relations with the group deteriorated and resulted in a legal dispute.

One of his former colleagues at the chamber of commerce told Yourmaidstone how he remembers Mr Thompson always had big luxury cars. He remembered how he attempted to sell his personalised 'Jim' number plate to TV legend Jimmy Savile.

Mr Thompson leaves behind his wife of 50-years Katie, his son Rod and daughter Fiona.

• Email yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk

Bin the bag artist

MAIDSTONE-based artist Graham Clarke is the new ambassador for the town's Bin the Plastic Bag campaign.

Mr Clarke from Boughton Monchelsea has said: "to be pleased to support such a very worthwhile campaign.

"We must look again at willow shopping baskets, hessian and jute bags."

VIEW THIS CLIP ON

yourkenttv.co.uk



Save cash in the Crunch. Julie's tips for holidays. Search 'crunch'

Country bids farewell to talented Tony Hart

AN online petition has been launched to install a memorial for the late Tony Hart in his home town.

The much-loved artist, who was born in Maidstone, died peacefully at his home in Surrey on Friday, January 16. He was 83.

Since his death more than 150 members have already joined the 'Maidstone Would like a Statue or Memorial of Maidstonian Tony Hart' group on social networking site Facebook.

The popular online group suggests a statue or memorial for Hart could be included and funded as part of the council's plan to improve the High Street.

It reads: "A gentleman and an inspiration to millions of children to pick up a pen and draw. I think Maidstone should have a memorial to him."

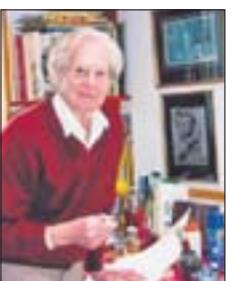
"If you think Maidstone should remember one of its sons ... join this group."

The group then urges people to put forward their ideas to the council.

Comments posted on the site show a statue of Hart's clay creation Morph is the most popular idea.

Hart was born in Hastings Road, Maidstone, on October 15, 1925, and attended St Margaret's Pre-Prep School in the town until the age of nine.

He served with the 1st Gurkha Rifles in



TALENTED: Artist Tony Hart

World War Two, before he studied at the Maidstone College of Art, now the University for the Creative Arts. He graduated in 1950.

From then he went on to start his 50-year long career in television.

In recent years the illustrator had suffered two strokes, which left him unable to draw.

Mr Hart spoke to our sister newspaper The Kentish Saturday Observer during an exclusive interview in October last year.

He said: "I enjoyed my 50-year career on television and were it not for my ill health I might still be doing a few things on the box."

"Sadly two strokes have brought my artistic activities to a halt."

Speaking of his childhood he added: "I had a very happy childhood but this was broken up by my schooling, which took me first to All Saints Choir School in London, and

later to Clayesmore public school in Dorset.

"Sadly I have not been able to visit my home town very often as my work has kept me within commuting distance of London, and Bristol.

"However, I did stay in Maidstone long enough to take part in local amateur dramatics in the period before I went off into the Indian Army."

Gaza peace vigil celebrates success

MAIDSTONE Green Party is celebrating a successful Gaza Peace Vigil and now Israel's ceasefire.

The Maidstone Green Party called for people on Saturday to put on a unified voice against Israel's attacks on Gaza.

On Sunday, Israel agreed to a ceasefire bringing to an end three weeks of attacks which has killed more than 1,000 Palestinians.

Stuart Jeffery, Green Party prospective parliamentary candidate for Maidstone and

the Weald said: "The Peace Vigil in Maidstone was very well attended with around 100 people calling for peace in Gaza."

"Although there has been a welcome ceasefire, we want to see political leaders held to account for the many war crimes that have been committed over the past three weeks."

Lib Dem councillors Tony Harwood, Jenny Pattison and Rob Callaghan also attended the vigil.



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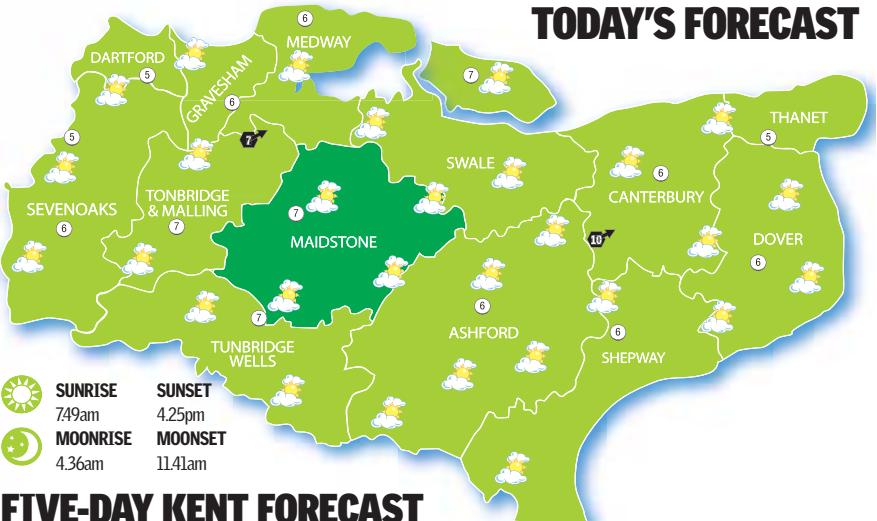
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FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	
Ashford	7°C	7°C	8°C	9°C	8°C	Gravesend	6°C	6°C	8°C	9°C
Canterbury	6°C	5°C	7°C	8°C	7°C	Maidstone	6°C	6°C	8°C	10°C
Chatham	6°C	6°C	9°C	9°C	8°C	Ramsgate	6°C	5°C	7°C	8°C
Dartford	6°C	6°C	8°C	9°C	9°C	Rochester	6°C	6°C	9°C	9°C
Dover	6°C	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	Sevenoaks	5°C	5°C	7°C	8°C
Faversham	6°C	6°C	9°C	9°C	8°C	Sittingbourne	6°C	6°C	9°C	9°C
Folkestone	6°C	6°C	6°C	7°C	7°C	Tonbridge	6°C	6°C	8°C	9°C
Gillingham	6°C	6°C	9°C	9°C	8°C	Tun Wells	6°C	6°C	8°C	9°C

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Chatham	Saturday	11:48am	5.3m
	Sunday	12:28pm	5.5m
Dover	Saturday	10:06am	5.8m
	Sunday	10:44am	6.0m
Dungeness	Saturday	9:50am	6.6m
	Sunday	10:33am	6.8m
Ramsgate	Saturday	10:36am	4.4m
	Sunday	11:14am	4.6m
Sheerness	Saturday	11:37am	5.2m
	Sunday	12:18pm	5.3m
Whitstable	Saturday	11:47am	4.8m
	Sunday	12:29pm	4.9m



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	5°C	Madrid	12°C
Athens	17°C	New York	-2°C
Barcelona	13°C	Paris	12°C
Beijing	4°C	Rome	14°C
Bombay	32°C	Sydney	26°C
Cape Town	27°C	Tenerife	19°C
Cardiff	6°C	Tokyo	14°C
Gibraltar	14°C	Vancouver	3°C
Hong Kong	24°C	Warsaw	1°C
Las Palmas	18°C	Wellington	17°C



HOTEL: Aquatic colour scheme is given go-ahead

Riverside hotel plans are drawn up in watercolours

A CHANGE of colour scheme to a new riverside hotel has been given the final stamp of approval by councillors.

St Peter's Wharf, an L-shaped six-storey Travel Lodge hotel which boasts 113 bedrooms, car park, restaurant and bar, will be built on the banks of the River Medway on St Peter's Street.

The design also includes an ASDA Living store on-site, which will share parking with existing stores TK Maxx, Hobbycraft and Homebase.

Maidstone council's Planning Committee approved the changes to the original plan after concerns were raised the colours were not suitable for the hotel's location.

Lib Dem Cllr for the environment Tony Harwood told Yourmaidstone: "The hotel was originally proposed to be decorated with garish rainbow colours. However, the Planning Committee insisted ultimately successfully that the riverside context for the hotel should be architecturally interpreted through the substitution of an aquatically-inspired colour scheme.

"The aquatically inspired colour scheme comprises a wash of shades from green through to blue which does better confer a sense of place."

Work to clear the site has already been undertaken, and works on the building are expected to begin shortly.

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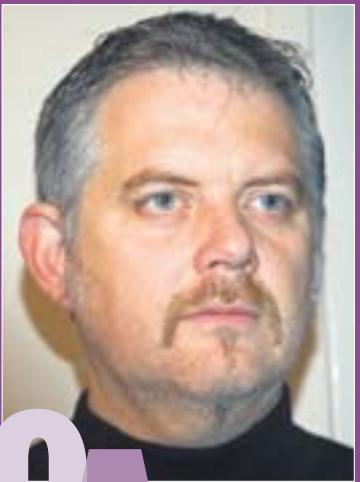
Show Sites: Polhill Garden Centre, London Rd Badgers Mount, Sevenoaks

Newham Court Shopping Village
Bearsted Road, Maidstone

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QUESTION & ANSWER

DANNY GREEN



Q & A

Anna White talks to Maidstone artist Danny Green about his career, his charity postcard for the Demelza House auction and why he feels the work of famous artist Damien Hirst lacks honesty and originality

Q Tell us a little bit about yourself?

A Though born in Bristol I have lived in and around Maidstone for the past 40 years. Art has always been with me and around me, but through life's twists and turns I was only able to finally devote myself full time to it in my early 40s when a career with Kent Police came to an abrupt end, after nearly 13 years, for personal reasons in the mid 1990s. I was finally able to do the Fine Art Degree that I had been unable to pursue when I left school, and since 2000 have made a living from my passion, both from painting, including many portrait commissions, and running a series of small, friendly art classes with my partner Val from our studio at Manor Farm in Wateringbury.

Q Tell us about the Damien Hirst inspired post card you recently submitted to a charity auction?

A When I was asked to produce a postcard for the charity auction in support of Demelza House, my thoughts turned straight away to the recent auction, on his own behalf that Hirst held at Christies. An obscene amount of money was raised for work that was tired, re-hashed and even by Hirst's standards, of poor quality. Aware of the other great showman, and master of gimmickry in the 'contemporary art' world, Banksy having done a skit on Hirst's Spot paintings, I thought that it would be quite fun to combine these two in the one

image, basing it on the Banksy image, but turning the maid into a caricature of Hirst as sexy maid, sticking his tongue out to the self appointed great and good in contemporary art, sweeping up all the money he has managed to get out of them, hence the title I gave to the piece "Gotcha". Banksy has been as effective as Hirst in promoting something which by no stretch of the imagination can be called 'great art', and making a lot of money from peoples' gullibility.

Q What is it you particularly dislike about Hirst's work?

A It's not really a question of my not particularly liking Hirst's work per se, but rather the impetus behind it. Art is by its very nature a subjective animal and one person's masterpiece is another's rubbish, and I don't have an issue with that. That I don't particularly like the actual work he (and by implication his team) produces is neither here nor there, what I dislike is the lack of honesty and originality about the work. The intrinsic value of the work produced as a 'work of art' is meaningless, it being seen merely in financial terms, as a commodity, and is lapped up by those with frankly more money than sense. What other explanation, for example, could there be for his recent 'skull' encrusted with diamonds. Good luck to him, Hirst has made a lot of money from it, his business, but please let's not call it 'art'.

Q Do you have any other pieces inspired by another artist or any other famous public figure?

A As is no doubt the case with many artists, many things and images can inspire you, the trick is to try and re-interpret that in a way that means something to you personally as an artist. I could list any number of artists whose work I admire and who have influenced my approach to painting. As to specific pieces, there are two paintings that can be directly referenced to works by other artists.

As for works inspired by public figures I have been intermittently working on a series relating to figures both famous and those not so, but equally caught up in the glare of unwanted publicity. One such is a painting based on a press photo of the wife of Harold Shipman, Primrose, another is that of Pete Townsend after his arrest on child porn charges.

Q Tell us about the exhibition you were part of on 30 metres of wall space at Maidstone House, Kings Street?

A Maidstone Borough Council Arts Department approached my representative Patsy Dixon, at Liberty Gallery, to ask me if I would like to have the first exhibition at their new space The Walkway at Maidstone House. Because Sarah Robson, their Arts Development manager, had seen some of my work in Liberty Gallery she knew I had works that would suit the topic of Childhood and Memory.

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Man in line for Radio 4 gong for raising awareness of eye disease. Search 'Royston'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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Fat chance to win money

NHS scheme to offer obese cash incentive for losing weight

■ BY JENNA PUDELEK

OBESE people are set to receive cash rewards from the NHS of more than £400 for losing weight.

But the Tories' health spokesman said he was "sceptical" about using taxpayers' cash to reward people for dieting.

East Kent health bosses are calling for hundreds of overweight men and women to take part in the trial and dieters can choose from cash or vouchers for holidays and shopping for dropping a few dress sizes or losing their beer bellies.

Rewards range from £70 for shifting 15lbs, to £425 for losing 50lbs and keeping it off for six months.

Shadow health secretary, Andrew Lansley, said: "While incentive schemes can be useful in helping people to lose weight, we are extremely sceptical about whether public money should be handed over in this manner.

Exercise

"Incentives should be geared around sustaining people's drive to lose weight, for example by encouraging them to do more exercise, not simply handing over taxpayers' hard-earned money."

But the country is facing an obesity crisis - the NHS in east Kent alone spends around £200million a year treating people for diseases linked to being obese or overweight such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent's public health specialist Claire Martin said: "In east Kent one in four people are obese so it is very clear that people need help to achieve a healthy weight."

"The whole issue of increasing levels of obesity is very complex and is clearly not just about choice."

"The annual cost to the NHS in east Kent is one fifth of its annual budget - so we need to look at ways of reducing this cost locally."



INCENTIVE: Health bosses are calling on the obese to take part in trial to earn rewards for shedding excess pounds

If the 'pounds for pounds' trial is successful and value for money it could be rolled out across the county and nationally.

The NHS in west Kent forks out £130million and in Medway £70million a year treating the overweight and obese.

Nationally more than 9,000 people die too young from obesity.

Government figures show that by 2015 the county's taxpayers will be spending £448million on the over-eating and under-exercising crisis.

Obesity specialist Ms Martin said the focus of the Kent scheme would reward for gradual weight loss, a balanced diet and lifestyle.

Its aim is long-term weight control, she said.

But experts say many people over eat for emotional reasons and can turn to food like

some turn to drugs or alcohol.

Asked whether the dieters will be too motivated by the money and revert to their fatty food habits after collecting the cash, Ms Martin said: "We recognise that achieving a healthy weight is complex and different levels of service need to be put in place for different people.

"For a proportion of the population the trial might be the programme that makes the difference for them."

"For others, a more specialised service will be required and we are investing in other programmes that address greater complexities within individuals as to why they have difficulty achieving a healthy weight."

• If you want to take part in the trial visit www.nhsweightlosstrial.com or call the helpline on 0800 849 4000.



POP IDOLS: The Cheeky Girls visited school in Sevenoaks

Cheeky little visit for singing pupils

POP beauties The Cheeky Girls were in Kent last week to hand over the prizes in a major school music competition.

They met pupils at the Sevenoaks Preparatory School, who won the Royal London Society for the Blind's inaugural White Christmas singing competition.

Keen RLSB supporters The Cheeky Girls judged the competition for the RLSB, and then listened to the winning pupils from Sevenoaks Preparatory School perform their successful version of the classic, Ave Maria.

The winners will also be recording their winning song at the school's sound studio.

Year Six pupil Jordan said: "It's been great to meet the Cheeky Girls, and I'm certain we can defend our title next time."

The Cheeky Girls do not charge for their appearances for the RLSB.

Monica Irimia, said: "Gaby and I have been delighted to be judges in this singing competition for the RLSB, and it's been great fun to meet and listen to the children from local schools. We'll definitely be back again for judge the next one."

Second and third places went to Dunton Green Primary and Seal Primary respectively.

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BREAK TIME

Wii enjoy keeping fit



GAME ON: Manager Luke Palmer with students

STUDENTS are bringing PE lessons into the 21st century using the Nintendo Wii.

Luke Palmer, manager at the Maidstone branch of Game, visited New Line Learning Academy to donate a Nintendo Wii and Wii Fit game.

The console and game were donated after PE teacher Phil Jones told Game he was looking for alternative ways for students, including the physically disabled, to keep fit and healthy.

The school was presented with the Wii by Mr Palmer, watched by head teacher Guy Hewett, Mr Jones and students.

■ BY ANNA WHITE

YOUNGSTERS from two more schools have been enjoying activities included in the Growing Scientists project.

Earlier this month, year eight pupils from Astor of Hever Community and Oakwood Park Grammar spent a day at a science-themed Space Camp.

The youngsters were divided into mission teams and took part in activities including going on a journey on the Astrojet space simulator, rocketry challenges and building solar powered appliances.

A highlight of the day was the launch of a 25ft rocket. Astor of Hever and Oakwood Park Grammar are two of the eight Maidstone schools taking part in the project.

The scheme, which was launched in October at The Friars, aims to promote interest in science among the young after industry bosses appealed for more students to take up the subject. Oakwood Park pupil Callum Murray was presented with a prize at the last year's launch after designing a logo for the scheme.

Ian Wesson, a science teacher from Invicta Grammar, which is also taking part in the scheme, said: "The UK lacks well-qualified science graduates and industry bosses are

Making space for scientists

unable to fill positions in manufacturing, research and development and engineering, according to the chief of the CBI.

The Space Camp is a precursor to specialised sessions aimed at drawing good, talented candidates into science-based subjects at university.

"It will include the professional rocket launch and, at 25-foot, it will be the biggest rocket we've used so far."

The Space Camp is the first installment of the three year project.

This will be followed by visits from specialist space schools to each of the participating schools to include chemical rocketry, space

robotics and an 'E-mission', among others.

An Easter residential school is also scheduled for 2009.

During the second year, students will be able to take part in a CSI-style forensics day, followed by specialist lessons including forensic chemistry and DNA profiling. Activities for the third year are still being planned.

Other schools taking part in the intergalactic project are Maidstone Girls' Grammar, Maidstone Grammar, Sutton Valence, Maplesden Noakes and St Simon Stock.

Groups from Invicta Grammar and Sutton Valence have already taken part in the educational Space Camp.

Talented designers return to their roots

THREE former students of Cornwallis Academy have been short-listed in the top 100 in a national design competition.

Graham Friend, 19, Tom Edwards and Claire Peters, both 18, who all left the New Line Learning Academy in Maidstone to go to university last year, made the list after entering the Brit Insurance Designs of the Year student competition.

The national contest is run jointly by the Design Museum in London and the

Academies Trust and was set up to encourage students to enter national competitions and raise their awareness and understanding of design.

The work was judged by a high-level panel, including designers whose work has been nominated in the Brit Insurance Design of the Year awards and was shown in an accompanying exhibition at the Design Museum.

Mr Edwards and Mr Friend entered the product design category and are now studying product design at

Bournemouth University and Foundation Art at UCCA, in Maidstone. Miss Peters entered the furniture design category and is now studying criminology at the University of Kent.

The students returned to their former school to be congratulated and presented with certificates and prizes by their design tutor, Rashida Noor.

The three were part of a particularly strong year of A-level design students with 100 per cent having achieved A-C for their final marks.



PROUD TRIO: (From left) Graham Friend, Claire Peters and Tom Edwards

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Joanna slams 'exaggerated' cost of letting Gurkhas stay in the UK

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

ACTRESS Joanna Lumley has declared war on the Ministry of Defence for "exaggerating" the cost of allowing retired Gurkhas to settle in the UK.

Last September, High Court judges ruled the current system of allowing only those soldiers who retired after 1997 to remain in the UK was unlawful and ordered the Home Office to come up with new rules.

Former Absolutely Fabulous star Lumley is backing a national campaign to secure equal rights for the Nepalese fighters, many of whom are based in Kent.

Shorncliffe Barracks in Folkestone is home to the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, who are currently serving in Afghanistan,



BATTLE: Joanna Lumley is fighting for Gurkhas' rights

while almost half the soldiers from the Maidstone-based 36 Engineers Regiment are Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

Responding to fears that Gurkhas will become too expensive as a result of the court ruling and be dropped from the Army as a

result, Lumley said the numbers entering the country would be small compared with other immigrant figures.

She said: "The MoD is making wildly exaggerated claims that as many as 50,000 may come."

The Home Affairs Select Committee took evidence on this matter last year, and the figure is more likely to be between 3,000 and 5,000.

Many of them had money deducted from their pay to help pay for it. They have as much right as any British citizen to use it."

An MoD spokeswoman dismissed speculation that it planned to disband the Gurkhas.

She said: "Between 1948 and 1997, some 30,100 Nepalese men joined the Brigade of Gurkhas. There are no plans to disband the Gurkhas, who have served this country with distinction and honour over many decades.

"We are working closely with the Home Office as it develops revised immigration rules for the Gurkhas."



REAL TWEET: Get your binoculars out and take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch this weekend

Your chance to join garden birdwatch

THE Big Garden Birdwatch – the world's biggest wildlife survey – takes place this weekend (January 24-25).

Last year, more than 16,000 Kent residents joined half a million people across the UK to note the birds in their garden, revealing which species were doing well and which were struggling.

Last year's results put starlings as the most common garden bird in the county, followed by house sparrows, although numbers of both species were down on previous years.

Hester Phillips, of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, said: "The survey started 30 years ago as a winter activity for our youth members. Now it appeals to both children and adults because it's fun, easy and only takes an hour to join in."

"Reaching our 30th birthday is a huge achievement and shows just how passionate people in Kent are about birds and wildlife.

"Over the last 30 years we've clocked up more than three million Big Garden Birdwatch hours in the UK, which is just incredible."

Last year, Kent participants recorded an average of four house sparrows per garden, compared with five in 2007 and 15 in 1991. This echoes the national trend, which has seen house sparrow decline by about two-thirds in the survey's 30-year period.

• For more details visit www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/.

Make 'em laugh at film festival

THINK you're funny? Can you put it all down on film? If so, you are in with a chance of taking part in an important film-making competition in Kent.

It's called the 2 Days Laughter Short Film Competition 2009.

It is free to enter and will be held on Saturday, April 4, at Theatre Royal Margate and is supported by Screen South and KCC Arts Investment Programme funding.

It is expected to attract more than 300 entries.

Beeping Bush Productions, which runs the 2 Days Later Short Film Competition, is bringing the sound of laughter back to Margate for

the second year of 2 Days Laughter Short Film Competition.

Following the success of the first 2 Days Laughter Screenings and Awards Ceremony last April, at the same venue, this year's competition has been expanded to include a special Young Comic Filmmakers' Awards section to allow schools and under-18s to take part.

Mick Etherton, the competition's co-director, said: "We hope this new category and matinee screening event will give an opportunity for Kent schools, youth organisations and individuals to try their hand at making us laugh."

• For more information, phone Mick Etherton or Chris Cordwell of Beeping Bush Ltd on 01843 223800. If you want



REEL CHANCE: Young filmmakers have a chance to impress at the 2 Days Laughter Short Film Competition to give your film a wider audience, you can upload it to our broadband TV website www.yourkenttv.co.uk.



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WOMEN seeking men

YOUNG BUT NOT FOOLISH

Happy-go-lucky 19yr old blonde, blue eyes, slim, loves meeting new people, WLTM a down-to-earth male for friendship to start but hopefully something more. Box 442858 **T** **P**

LOVELY SUSIE

Sensitive, shy and caring lady, 20, loves life and sunsets, beaches, country walks, romantic meals, cinema, WLTM handsome gent to find love with. Box 446323

TAKE ME FOR WHO I AM

Hi I'm Sam, 22, looking for a relationship. I'm blonde, have brown eyes, love cosy nights in and cinema, looking to share a relationship. Box 447871 **T**

SINGLE DAD WANTED

Single mum, 23, nice and curvy, 5ft6, blonde, blue eyes, likes shopping, cinema and animals, WLTM an honest and trustworthy male, 28-38. Box 446098 **T**

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SEEKS SOULMATE

Fun to be with blonde female, 25, 5ft2, loves football(), going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man to be soulmate. Box 446494 **T**

SMILES

Hi I'm 27, redheaded, 5ft1, blue eyes, intelligent, open-minded, caring, loves going out, music, good meals, seeking friendship and snuggles with caring, understanding gent. Box 446786 **T**

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Lively female, 26, 5ft2, brown hair, green eyes, size 10, single mum, enjoys most things, seeks genuine, laid-back guy, for fun, friendship and more. Box 442855 **T**

HOOLD MY HAND

Single mum, 28, looking for LTR. I enjoy cosy nights in, dancing, dining out. I'm 5ft1, short hair, blue eyes. Box 445363 **T**

NO TIMEWASTERS!

Easygoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, cosy night in, WLTM loving, caring white male 35-47 for long term loving relationship. Box 444214 **T**

CHATHAM UP!

Pretty black female, 32, tall, loves watching football, shopping, travel, seeking tall, white, loving male, 34-47, for LTR. Chatham. Box 437778 **T**

FUN-LOVING FEMALE

Attractive, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTM intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 **T** **P**

CANTERBURY TALE

Hi guys, fun-loving single mum, 34, WLTM the man of my dreams! I'm genuine, honest and full of life! Only decent, honest men may apply!! Box 406670 **T**

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SOUND GOOD?

Hello I'm 35, kind, caring and non-smoking, enjoy cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for that special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447985 **T**

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Loving, caring, tactile female, 36, 5ft8", blonde hair, blue-eyes, NS, GSOH,

likes cinema, bowling, country pubs,

nights in/out, seeks male for friend-

ship and LTR. Box 827619 **T**

FRiENDSHIP, MAYBE MORE

Social, genuine, honest, single mum, 36, 5ft6, I've got hazel eyes and dark hair and enjoy the cinema, meals out, WLTM sincere, attractive, genuine. Box 446840 **T**

BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY

Caring lovable lady, 42, genuine, short brown hair, lacks confidence seeking loyal, genuine person, someone special to put the spark back into my life. Box 885761 **T**

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Good-looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, 2 kids. Looking for new friends and hopefully someone special. Box 446039 **T**

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

37yr old female, two kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5ft2, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my special someone. Box 446552 **T**

TRY ME

Ashford-based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring and loving man. I have 2 kids and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446985 **T**

SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, sees genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666 **T**

HAPPINESS, THE GREATEST GIFT...

Shy female, 40, 5ft9, blue eyes, short blonde hair, medium build, loves going out, pub, clubs, cinema, shopping, walks, loves films and shopping likewise gent to be happy with. Box 446763 **T**

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTM slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573 **T**

HELP TO MAKE YOU HAPPY

Caring lovable lady, 42, genuine, short brown hair, lacks confidence seeking loyal, genuine person, someone special to put the spark back into my life. Box 885761 **T**

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Good-looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, 2 kids. Looking for new friends and hopefully someone special. Box 446039 **T**

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

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TRY ME

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SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, sees genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666 **T**

TOO MUCH TO ASK?

Female blonde, 41, 5ft6, blonde, brown eyes, medium build, enjoys meals out, music etc, meals at 38-42, for romance. Box 159275 **T**

PASSION FOR YOU

Medium build woman, 41, 5ft2, kind, caring, loving and tactile, GSOH, looking to meet a nice man for a LTR. Box 446509 **T**

YOU'LL SMILE IF YOU DIAL

Bubbly 40yr old female, enjoys beaches, pubs, clubs, WLTM a like-minded, caring male to share fun times with. Box 447102 **T**

FUN AND ROMANCE

Attractive woman, 41, 5ft6, blonde hair/blue eyes. I'd like to meet a guy for romance and fun, I enjoy cinema, pubs, meals out. Box 447009 **T**

LET'S CLICK

WLTM a nice guy with a similar nature; I'm an outgoing woman, 42, with brown hair and green eyes. Tell me about you! Box 446847 **T**

YOU NEVER KNOW

Kind, loving and caring mum, 43, 5ft5, round but cuddly! Just looking for someone to share my life with...how about you? St. Leonards-on-Sea. Box 446457 **T**

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS

Laid-back single mum, very bubbly, outgoing and intelligent, 43, enjoys social life, drinks, meals, cinema; looking to start afresh with someone new, easygoing and life-loving. Box 446102 **T**

HISTORIC MEETING?

Mum of three, 36, long mousey hair, blue eyes, interested in historical places, music, eating out, seeks kind, caring, genuine male 36-49, non-smoker, for LTR. Box 446933 **T**

DON'T PASS ME BY

Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897983 **T** **P**

MEND A BROKEN HEART

Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 908053 **T** **P**

DON'T LET ME DOWN

Pretty, black female, 38, 5ft4, like football, socialising and cooking, looking for a loving and caring male, 38-42, for a LTR. Box 446684 **T**

ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!

Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724 **T**

BLONDE AMBITION

Bubbly, cuddly blonde single mum, 38, 5ft5, likes cars, reading, pubs, cosy nights in, having a laugh, looking for that right male for LTR. Box 905614 **T** **P**

ANIMAL LOVER?

Nurse, 37ys, 2 kids, 5ft8, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for a kind, caring, loyal male Box 431557 **T**

CANTERBURY TALE

Attractive, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTM intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 **T** **P**

ANIMAL LOVER?

Pretty black female, 32, tall, loves watching football, shopping, travel, seeking tall, white, loving male, 34-47, for LTR. Chatham. Box 437778 **T**

FUN-LOVING FEMALE

Attractive, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTM intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 **T** **P**

DEAL OR NO DEAL? (IN DEAL)

Deal-based lady, 43, divorced,

brunette, green eyes, 5ft10, likes going out, pub, clubs, cinema, shopping, walks, loves films and sports except cricket. Box 430384 **T** **P**

MISS JULIE

Bubbly blonde, 44, stupid and like

having a laugh, good company, friend-

ship, would like to meet new friends for hopefully love... Box 888162 **T**

COULD IT BE YOU?

Hi I'm 44, slim, 5ft8, a redhead, love

nights out, socialising, looking for

friendship initially and hopefully more

later on. Box 888900 **T**

WHERE R U?

Cheerful, honest, popular blonde,

50s old, 5ft2, slim, looking to find an

honest, loyal man. Box 888162 **T**

NEW FRIENDS

Divorced woman, Maidstone area. I'm

a nurse and enjoy family life, country

seaside, nights out, socialising, meet

new people. Box 447982 **T**

BUBBLY

Brunette, 45, 5ft3, blue eyes, size 18,

likes socialising and nights in, looking

for a nice, honest and caring gent to

share good times with. Box 447642 **T**

ENTERTAIN ME

49yo female, medium build, blonde

hair, 5ft10, medium build, tall, short

curly, short, seeking tall, confident,

sensual guy for regular wine, dining,

loving and laughter, honest, genuine

and loving. Box 438851 **T**

CARING & PROFESSIONAL

Female 49, 5ft4, long hair, slim,

kind, caring, good natured, honest,

loyal, good listener, good listener,

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yourmaidstoneblogger

Each week we get a mystery writer to air their views on living in and around Maidstone...

'And the award for overblown attention seeking goes to ...'

WHY do they do it? Why do they not only humiliate themselves but everyone else around them – and on such a global stage?

I am, of course, talking about actors and actresses. And, more specifically, as they collect an award.

Look at Kate Winslet last week. I was, until recently, something of a fan. And part of her charm, I believed, was her down-to-earth nature. She was British and, therefore, I reasoned, in proud possession of a stiff upper lip.

How wrong I was. At the recent Golden Globes awards, she turned in an attention-seeking display worthy in itself of an Oscar, at the very least. Probably two.

She went through the whole range of overblown emotions. Gulping, gasping, blubbing, hyperventilating – you name it, she did it.

It was a truly ghastly spectacle and one

which she should be wholly ashamed of. By all means be happy; by all means shed a subtle tear. Just don't stand there bringing shame on our nation.

In fact, were there any justice, they'd have called her back on stage after she quaffed her first celebratory glass of champagne and told Kate her acceptance speech was so awful the award was being withdrawn and given to Dame Judi Dench instead.

She'd collect it sensibly, of that I have no doubt. Displays of such ridiculous, false and forced emotion should be banished.

However, I fear Ms Winslet's titanic display is only the tip of a gruesome iceberg (see what I did there – *Titanic*/Winslet/iceberg – clever eh?) which is making slow but steady progress towards the good ship Self Control.

Because on February 22 it is the Academy Awards. A ceremony which has disappeared so far up its own backside it has now emerged from its left ear. The Oscars leave me as cold as a cold thing on an icy day with snow forecast. They are injected with an importance which is

completely out of keeping with the medium. Now, we all like a film, and when we go to the cinema, apart from moaning about the price of popcorn, a good time tends to be had by all.

But movies are not the be all and end all. They do not deserve the world to grind to a halt every year so we can watch actors and actresses rewarded for jobs they already get paid millions to do. They do not deserve the TV schedules to be cleared in the morning so we can go live to a reporter standing outside Elton John's post-Oscars party.

Of course, what makes it all so much worse – the icing on the sickly-sweet cake – is the crushing possibility of Winslet winning again and making another complete display of herself. And that's worthy or someone – anyone – calling, "Cut!" surely?

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yourletters

SAMMY WELCH

Tell us about yourself?

I'm 23, I live in Downswood, in Maidstone, but I am at Southampton Solent University in my final year of a business and marketing degree. I also work part time designing graphics for a company which makes products for yachts. I would like to get into marketing

when I graduate, but that industry is one of the worst hit jobs wise at the moment. **How has the credit crunch affected your lifestyle?**

It has only really affected me within my job as people are slowing down on non-essential buys. Because of people stopping their spending the amount of work

TALK TIME

coming in has slowed down so the amount of hours available to me has decreased. The credit crunch has affected my spending habits, how much I go out, and buying new things because I have less work.

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YOUR LETTERS

Is end to Morris Dancing any real loss to society?

So the future of Morris dancing is in doubt according to the report in last week's newspaper.

Surely the practise of dressing in ridiculous costumes, striking one another with a wooden stick and rotating round in ever increasing circles is worth preserving?

Or maybe not.

Morris dancers on their last legs?

THE sport and community benefits of Morris dancing will not be within me described, as communities have warned. The Morris Ring, an association of the last 100 Morris dancing groups across the country, has urged councils to review the amount of money they pay to it or cancel the grant one Royal borough is determined to leave the boulder-throwing budget alone.



The origins of Morris dancing, a style of folk dance that dates back centuries, are obscured by the mists of time. The dance is known for some leaping, leaping and twirling motions in rapid sequence. However, with the exception of those taking part, most of those taking part are not.

Miles Cochrane
Faversham

MBE is well-deserved for our first black footballer

I was interested to read the article on Clyde Best, one of the first black footballers to achieve prominence.

He came through at a time when football crowds were distinctly unpleasant and racist behaviour, which is now highlighted as unusual, was very much the norm.

I was pleased to read he had been honoured with an MBE and recognised for his pioneering work by fellow professionals as it cannot have been easy for him to cope with the abuse and general intolerance of crowds in the 70s.

I remember watching him play once and was sickened by the abuse he received – mainly at the hands of his own West Ham fans.

Brian Hamilton
By email

Bored of the crunch, it's time for some new news

Am I alone in being thoroughly bored by the credit crunch?

If people just shut up about it and behaved normally it might just go away.

I accept it is tough on people with mortgages but for so long I have had to put up with them going on about how much their house is now worth I really don't care.

It has become a dull subject and the more people go on about it the worse it will be.

Teresa Knowles
By email

The council staff strike proposal is pure greed

The fact KCC staff are looking at the possibility of strike action is frankly absurd.

At a time of economic crisis the council that lost untold millions in the Icelandic banking fiasco has staff working for it who feel their pay increases are not enough.

What an insult to those who are at risk of losing their jobs or have already done so.

There is no excuse whatsoever for this blatant greed and lack of consideration for others.

Mike Roach
By email

Pay rises would be a total waste of our tax money

The staff at KCC who think there pay increases are not high enough and are threatening to strike should take a look at their own actions. The fact the council lost a fortune in the Icelandic banking disaster shows the people at the top do not know what they are doing. They should remember it is our money they have thrown away.

Now they have the nerve to ask for more of our money to increase their paychecks.

If any action is taken I feel people would be perfectly justified in withholding their council tax to show the disgust they feel at this stupid short-sighted action.

Roger Holcombe
By email

Decent music can Take That as it's Busted away

Apparently according to a recent survey Take That are the coolest band in the world according to the nation's teenagers.

They are followed by Girls Aloud, Aerosmith and Busted.

Is there no taste left in the world?

Eric Paige
By email

Prince story a pointless waste of time and effort

The recent controversy over Prince Harry and his stupid use of language has been blown out of all proportion by the media.

I know I am adding to this by writing to your newspaper but it seems like it has been used to fill papers as a distraction to what is really going on in the world.

On the day this non-story appeared a Royal Marine died in Afghanistan – now which is more important, the loss of a young life or an ill advised comment by someone who was then stupid enough to be filmed saying it?

The triviality of this issue is a good example of the way things are dealt with in Britain.

Real problems and facts are completely ignored in favour of something people really do not care about but the media can whip itself up into a self righteous furore about.

Elaine Braddock
By email

Charles' un-PC comments were at least admitted to

Regarding the story about Prince Charles addressing an Indian friend as "Sooty" – at least the authorities didn't try to sweep the allegations under the carpet.

Andy Sturridge
By email

Generosity of volunteers is a good example to all

Last week you carried a story about the St John's Ambulance volunteers and their work in the county.



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There cannot be many people who give up their holiday time to help others, so their sacrifice is a cause for praise. During a period when so many people point out the selfish nature of modern life their example is one which should be emphasised.

Michael Ferguson
By email

Fishing regulations are a ridiculous idea

The proposal by the European Union to allow member state Governments to set their own fishing quotas for each protected species has noble ambitions, but as ever the devil is in the detail.

Under new plans, Britain's 1.4 million sea anglers could be forced to record their catches, turning a popular hobby into a laborious form-filling exercise.

Shore anglers are understandably furious, whilst the idea each boat or dinghy will have to be registered and every possible launch point policed is a bureaucratic nightmare in the making. For the EU to target recreational sea anglers after years of fudging the commercial fishing industry problem is both lazy and misguided.

Happily Defra threw out a recent proposal on licencing sea anglers after lobbying from the Countryside Alliance, so we will be looking for a similar rejection this time.

Simon Hart, chief executive, Countryside Alliance

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Europe's largest health, beauty and wellbeing show is celebrating its 10th birthday this year – which means even more premium names, fabulous experiences and experts.

And for those after a more hands-on approach, this year's show offers even more opportunities than ever before. The Healing Herb Garden and the Health and Nutrition Stage are the perfect stop offs for girls in need of a nutritional boost, while the Zest Fitness Park provides an excuse to put on those trainers and get stuck into a workout session or dance class.

If you're seeking relaxation rather than perspiration, the luxurious surroundings of the Vitality Day Spa with its massages, reflexology and facials will be calling. And after a few treatments, visitors will be able to take advantage of the Nails Inc. bar and hair makeovers and styling tips from the hair salon. Other must-visit experiences include: The Oasis, a calming zone where guests can try out alternative ther-



apies at a fraction of the cost; The Top Sante Anti-Ageing Clinic full of talks from experts on how to look 10 years younger; the Organic Pavilion in association with LoveLula.com, a zone dedicated to certified organic, natural products and the fashionista's favourite Style Theatre plus so much more! KOS Media has teamed up with the Vitality Show to offer five lucky readers a pair of tickets to the show plus the lucky first prize winner drawn will win a Goodie Bag worth £50 (filled with goodies from some of the exhibitors from the Vitality Show) to go with their pair of tickets.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your e-mail address (if applicable), name,

address, and daytime telephone number to Vitality Show, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR. Closing date is February 27, 2009.

Question: What date is the Vitality Show?

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If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.

Tickets for The Vitality Show 2009 cost £14.50 in advance or £17.50 on the door. For all the latest news and information on the show, visit www.thevitalityshow.co.uk or call 0871 230 5569 to book your tickets.

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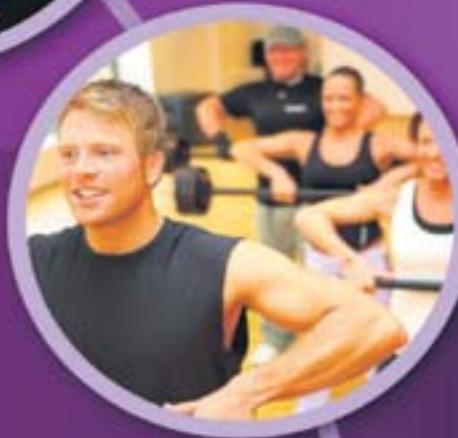
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IRISHMAN Ed Byrne seems to be an unstoppable force in the world of stand-up comedy.

The likeable funny man has added 60 extra dates to his Different Class tour, after his autumn gigs fully sold out. His show was the fastest selling ticket at last year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival and demand for his comedy has continued to snowball.

Fans will have to move fast if they want to get hold of tickets for his Kent dates. One of his two nights at Tunbridge Wells' Trinity Theatre had already sold out at the time of writing, while the other was selling fast. Tickets for his gigs at other venues will be snapped up before too long, so do not waste time if you want to see this master at work.

The Perrier Award-nominated comic, who used to sport a long ponytail, is a prolific performer and a favourite at the Edinburgh Fringe. In 2007, his Standing Up and Falling Down tour was also a sell-out success, delighting audiences all over the country.

The floppy-haired Irishman, 36, is also a big hit in other countries, having taken the last tour to Australia and New Zealand. He has given acclaimed performances at comedy festivals and clubs in Montreal, Paris, Singapore, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, Los Angeles, New York and Aspen. American television viewers have embraced his style of comedy – he has been invited to appear on popular talk show Late Night With Conan O'Brien five times.

Byrne's UK television work includes numerous memorable appearances on panel shows such as Mock The Week, 8 Out of 10 Cats, Never Mind The Buzzcocks and



FUNNY: Tickets are selling fast to see Ed Byrne when he comes to Kent during his tour

Have I Got News For You. He has hosted his own series, Ed Byrne's Just For Laughs, on Irish national channel RTE and is the voice of the Carphone Warehouse commercials.

His talents are not restricted to stand-up and voice-overs. Byrne has branched out into acting, both comic and straight, landing key roles in a number of TV shows, films and stage productions. He has appeared in the films RAT, I Could Never Be Your Woman and Are You Ready For Love and played the lead character in Jason Rothwell's Zemanovaload, portraying an obsessive screenwriter.

Byrne won a role in a Father Ted Christmas special, playing a grungy teenager, and appeared as Davina

McCall's flatmate Alex in the ITV sitcom Sam's Game. Fans of the daytime TV series Doctors will have spotted Byrne playing wheeler dealer Mickey Moran. As a stage actor, Byrne played the lead role in a 2004 production of Brian McAvera's Kings Of The Road.

His recent marriage has provided plenty of material for Different Class, which focuses on Byrne's claim that he is unable to fit in with any class of people.

Ed Byrne will be at Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Friday, February 6; Orchard Theatre, Dartford, on Saturday, February 21, and Central Theatre, Chatham, on Sunday, April 5.

FOR MORE THEATRE AND ENTERTAINMENT VISIT yourkenttv.co.uk

with
JANE CONNOLY
Email jane.connolly@kosmedia.co.uk

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

Running until Saturday, February 21
Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood

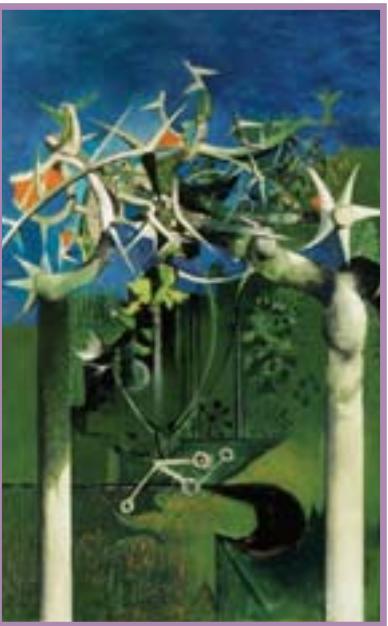
REDISCOVER the work of one of England's greatest painters as Graham Sutherland's work goes on display.

The exhibition brings together privately owned works and pieces which have been hidden away in public archives, along with other important paintings which have not been shown to the public until now.

Sutherland was an artist of immense influence, inspiring the likes of Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud. He lived for many years in the White House in Trottscliffe, near West Malling, and his grave can be found in the village graveyard.

Visitors will see some of Sutherland's earliest landscapes and studies from before he became an official war artist, rare drawings and sketches that accompany the final pieces and archive footage of Sutherland working in his studio.

Mascalls Gallery is open from 10am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and 11am to 4pm, Friday and Saturday. Admission is free. For more information about the gallery visit the website www.mascallsgallery.org.



THE WILDERS

Monday, January 26 
Zebra Bar, Maidstone

BEAT the winter blues with the infectious, good-time music of true country band The Wilders.

Acclaimed as a 'must see' band, The Wilders leave audiences both delighted and exhausted in their wake. Giving old-time country bluegrass tunes a contemporary edge, the highly charged act promises audiences a fun-packed evening of great music and humour.

The buzz surrounding the band from Kansas City has been huge since they first toured the UK in 2006. Their Edinburgh Festival debut earned five star reviews and there was soon standing room only, their blend of roots-of-country, bluegrass and hillbilly music winning over audiences and critics alike.

Led by guitarist, singer



and wisecracker Ike Sheldon, the band also includes multi-award-winning fiddler Betse Ellis. Nate Gawron's slap bass lines revisit the honky tonk heroes of the 40s and 50s.

With Dobro on clawhammer banjo and Phil Wade on

mandolin, they create a sound that will drive away the January blues. The London-based AHAB is also on the bill.

The gig starts at 8pm and tickets cost £10 in advance or £12 on the door. To book call 01622 744481.

4 POOFS AND A PIANO

Saturday, January 31
Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone 

DESCRIBED as 'more hairdresser than barbershop', 4 Poofs and a Piano are tinkling their ivories all over the country.

Keen to prove they are far more than just Jonathan Ross' sidekicks, the popular house band from his BBC television show are bringing their brand of camp fun to Kent.

The band had a fairytale beginning – when three actors joined the London Gay Men's Chorus back in 2000, they decided to get together and try to earn extra money by singing. One of their members was a receptionist at London's exclusive Groucho Club and their first gig was a slot in the annual charity show in front of an audience of famous faces.

A few days later they received a call inviting them to become the house band on Friday Night with Jonathan Ross. Global megastars such as Madonna and Will Smith have been welcomed by their dulcet tones and they have even more to offer.

The show starts at 8pm and tickets cost £14. To book call the box office on 01622 758611 or see www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk.



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MAIDSTONE LEISURE

Classic black comedy on offer at the theatre

ARSENIC and Old Lace is being staged at the Oast Theatre in Tonbridge.

Joseph Kesselring's 1939 play tells the farcical story of a theatre-hating drama critic who struggles to deal with a number of murderous relatives.

The show will be at the theatre in London Road from Saturday until January 31. Tickets cost £8/£7. To book call the box office on 01732 363849.

Debut album is a First Addiction for this band

MAIDSTONE band Shotgun Junky will be launching their debut album at the town's Zebra Bar next week.

First Addiction combines their classic, modern rock and funk sound with soulful melodies.

The music starts at 7.45pm and tickets cost £5 on the door. The show is for over-18s only. For more information visit www.myspace.com/soundsatzebra.

Support the lifeboats with wine and cheese

HELP raise money for a good cause at a cheese and wine evening for the RNLI.

The event will be at Westborough Primary School in Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, on Saturday, starting at 7.30pm. Admission costs £5.

Participants are asked to book for catering purposes, call Alan Cocks on 01622 761004 or John Ashbolt on 01622 725435.

Enjoy double the talent thanks to Paul's guests

JOIN Paul Dunton and Guests for local talent showcase in Tunbridge Wells.

The Logan Wilson Band headlines tonight at the Grey Lady Music Lounge in The Pantiles, along with The Jemima Price Band, SW3 and Matt Rivers. Sunday's event will headline Jo Hook.

The evening starts at 7.30pm and admission costs £5. See www.myspace.com/paulduntonandguests.

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Search for more directory listings at
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Brace yourselves for the next instalment of SMF



FESTIVAL fans rejoice – the new-and-improved Sellindge Music Festival is but 141 days away.

Through the wonders of the World Wide Web I have been informed that the mid-Kent event is coming back for its second year.

In the quest for more information a Facebook group set up to spread the joyous news of Sellindge Music Festival 2009 sent me clicking and double clicking all the way to Myspace and eventually brought me to the dedicated SMF 09 website.

All of this means I am now in a position to confirm the following:

Sellindge Music Festival will take place across three days from Friday, June 5, to Sunday, June 7, giving festival fans an extra day's music to enjoy on last year's offering.

Organisers have launched their very own battle of the bands competition to fill two slots on the main stage's bill. Heats will take place at The Frenchman in Christchurch Road, Folkestone, on Thursday, January 22, and Thursday, February 12. For more information send an e-mail with links to your music to ben@sellindgemusicfestival.co.uk.

Festival promoters are already excited by SMF 2009. On the event's Facebook page Benjamin Wells wrote: "Kent's most exciting music event will be taking place on three days in June in the beautiful countryside between Ashford and Folkestone.

"The weekend will see artists perform in multiple event areas, including the Main Stage, Acoustic Stage, Comedy Tent, and Dance Tent.

"BBC Kent Introducing will also be showcasing the county's most up and coming bands, alongside NorthSouthDivide, who are bring-

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON



BACK FOR MORE: Mark Morriss, left, and Idlewild played last year's music festival

ing the freshest talent from London and Manchester to Sellindge.

"SMF can accommodate over 20,000 festival-goers, who will see performances from more than 100 artists and DJs, be able to browse the many trade-stalls, enjoy the rides in the fairground, helicopter tours, and check out the art exhibition put on by the Folkestone Artists Cooperative."

Last year's inaugural SMF event saw the likes of Scottish rockers Idlewild, The Hair, Sy Arthur and The Bluetones' Mark Morriss take to the stage.

The festival also boasted a main, folk, dance and BBC Introducing stage bursting with the best talent from Kent and further afield.

• For more information on this year's three-dayer visit www.sellindgemusicfestival.co.uk

UPLOAD YOUR MUSIC VIDEOS TO BROADCAST ON OUR WEBSITE @ yourkenttv.co.uk



STUNNING VOICE: Kayley performs an acoustic version of Chasing Dreams



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- 2 Sizen - 29/1 Beercart Arms Canterbury
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- 4 Coffee Artists Presents - 7/2 Music Room Pizza Express Maidstone
- 5 Euston - 13/3 Fleur-de-Lis Sandwich

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BEAT THE CRUNCH

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Driving costs a bomb – we look at how to save motoring money

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Signature Miramar, retirement/residential home in Beltinge Herne Bay is offering 14 nights stay for the price of 13

■ Colour Choice Conservatories in Margate is offering free colour on conservatory orders

Living Out Log Cabins in Chestfield and Maidstone is offering 15 per cent off plus free delivery on all DIY log cabins

■ County Garage in Herne Bay is offering 15 per cent off Ford accessories. Includes car mats, mudflaps, boot protectors, scuff plates, alloy wheels, roof bars, chrome tailpipe finisher, dog guards, roof boxes, parking sensors

■ Home Plus in Ashford and Chatham is offering £200 off when you spend over £1000

■ F G Barnes in Maidstone is offering free six month road fund license with all used cars

■ Orchard Spot in Maidstone is offering one free pudding with a main course purchased from the sunday carvery

■ Dartford Portable buildings in Dartford is offering up to 10 per cent off timber buildings. Finance available on Crompton garages

■ KOS is offering Alex classic light – one of the world's best reading lights, £84.99 save £30

■ Kentish Hardwood flooring in Rainham is offering 15 per cent off Karndean products

■ Morris & Turner in Medway is offering 10 per cent off any multi-fuel stove

■ KOS is offering a big button digital cordless phone just £24.99 save £20

■ Medway Stoves in Medway is offering a free companion set with any multi-fuel stove purchased

■ Positive impact golf in Manston is offering £10 off any lessons

■ County Garage in Herne Bay is offering a free winter health check and free 29 point including wash and vacuum

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering three months free storage for a year for all new document storage clients

■ Orchard Spot in Maidstone is offering one ticket get one free for music nights, meal only

■ KOS is offering all seasons duck duvet, two duvets that button together from only £39.99, save over 50 per cent, various sizes

■ KOS is offering leather organiser handbag by Jane Shilton only £49.99 inc p&p saving £40 off RRP

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www.vouchersforkent.co.uk

TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

Welcome to KOS Media's guide to beating the crunch

So 2008 was the year when the UK faced up to a financial reality check.

Soaring house prices led to massive mortgages which many people couldn't really afford.

With many banks and building societies actively encouraging people to borrow even more, the bubble was bound to burst – and it did, big time.

That would have been bad enough on its own, but the debt dominoes and the house of

credit cards fell just as we were entering an economic downturn which was part of the global commercial cycle of ups and downs.

On its own, the downturn would have probably not been too bad (we'll never really know, of course), but with the borrowing binge hangover what would have been a bad cold in the City turned into a vicious bout of financial 'flu' which affected just about everyone.

But 2009 is another year, another new start.

So let's all try and fight back against the credit squeeze, and make some resolutions

about CCCs – climate change changes.

Here KOS Media writers have gathered some topical tips and advice about how to cope.

We have looked at everything from making a household budget to ideas for cheap holidays, and advice for businesses from experts to how to make your motoring money go that little bit further.

And we have also prepared a series of videos giving practical advice on how to save cash, so join our presenter Julie Maddocks at yourkenttv.co.uk.

How you can save money – just click on vouchersforkent.co.uk

TO TRY and help all our readers through credit crunch KOS Media – the publisher of this newspaper – has joined forces with businesses across our county to come up with some very special deals, discounts and offers.

Getting these offers really couldn't be easier – simply log onto vouchersforkent.co.uk and you can start saving money today.

Using our unique and easy-to-use page turning e-edition you can browse through the online voucher books to find the offers you want to take advantage of.

There are three different voucher books – leisure, food and drink; retail trade and services; and motors and servicing.

To save money, simply print out the voucher you want and take it to the business offering the deal.

There are fantastic range of bargains on offer – from cheap nights out to beat the credit crunch blues, to money-saving deals on home improvements.

There are no limits on the number of vouchers from the booklet you can use, so there are

loads of opportunities to save money and reduce your shopping bill.

But please take note to read the terms and conditions on each voucher carefully – not all the offers last forever and have to be used by a certain date.

We wouldn't want you to be disappointed by missing out on any bargains you want.

To get a taste of some of the deals available online, see the lists of offers included on the pages of your special Beat The Crunch supplement.

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Don't buy into store tactics

Read this and you really will save cash at the supermarket

By **JEFFREY STRAIN**

BY far the best way to truly keep your supermarket shopping expenses under control is by understanding how supermarkets entice you to spend more than you really want.

Here are some ways that supermarkets manipulate you into spending more than you had planned and some simple steps you can take to save money.

Supermarkets intentionally smell of freshly-baked goods. That makes you hungry. Hungry shoppers spend more cash. Fact.

So, only go shopping after you have had a meal and are full. If timing doesn't allow for you to do this, at least drink a couple of glasses of water before leaving to make you feel full before shopping.

Did you ever notice that when you only need to buy a few vital items, they are spread out across the supermarket? Putting basic staple items in the same general area would make happier customers, but supermarkets know that the longer you are there, the more money you are likely to spend. Stores are deliberately designed this way.

Although there is no way around going to the far corners of the store to get the groceries you need avoid impulse purchases.

Make a list of the items you need and stick to it. Get into the habit of making a single trip once a week – thus reducing your time

in the store and the risk of impulse buys.

Manufacturers of brand-named products pay hefty fees to stores to have their merchandise placed on the shelves at adult eye level (and child eye level in the case of products aimed at children such as cereal).

That means products placed at eye level are usually the most expensive so take a few seconds to look at the upper and lower shelves. Similar products are placed together and simply looking will often reveal the same product at a much better price.

Take the time to check the other brands and see if there is a better deal.

And always remember that if you weren't

planning to buy the item and you don't really need it, then it really isn't a bargain for you, no matter what the price.

The checkout aisle of a store is like a mini mart in itself. This is because supermarkets know that they have a captive audience while you wait in line to pay for your groceries.

The best way to avoid these temptations is to plan your shopping during off-peak hours.

By taking the time to understand how the supermarkets try to influence your shopping and spending habits, you have now put yourself in control. Utilise the suggestions about how to counter the supermarkets' selling techniques and you will be able to control your gro-

cery spending to a much greater extent and should have a much easier time keeping to your monthly food budget.

• *Jeffrey Strain is a journalist who always plans to save you money. See more at www.savingadvice.com.*



OFF YOUR TROLLEY: Don't buy things you don't really need, always take a list shopping

Top tips to save while supermarket shopping

- In addition to using coupons, try to buy only the "loss leader" specials (those big sales advertised in the newspaper ad). Buy lots of these items and freeze or store for the future.
- Did you know that you can freeze milk? Use frozen milk within three months. Remember to pour a little of the milk out (into another jug) before you freeze it, so that it doesn't expand and burst the plastic jug. It will look yellow when frozen, but will thaw out and look normal. It saves on trips to the supermarket.
- Plan ahead on your meals. For instance, Mondays: chicken, Tuesdays: minced beef, etc. Add rice, vegetables, pasta or potatoes for the side dishes. When you break it down you have for example chicken, four times a month so there is no boredom.
- For those money-saving big shops, keep two or three laundry baskets in the back of the car. Cheaper than buying another 'bag for life' and saves plastic bags.
- Buy meat when it's in the "reduced" section when the "sell-by" date is that day or one day away. Freeze when you get home.
- If you want to make saving cash fun and you like to cook, scan through my favourite cookbooks and plan out an entire month's menu in advance. One mum who does this said: "I make an inventory of the food I do have and then make a list of what I need to go on one big grocery shopping excursion. This minimizes the amount of trips I need to make in a month, thus saving me on my grocery budget. I only need to go every other week for milk, fruit and deli meat."

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Don't let the credit crunch bite you



STRESSED OUT: Don't let financial worries make you ill, take measures to stay relaxed

INCREASING bills, shrinking credit and gloomy forecasts that financially life can only get worse are fast becoming the ingredients of a toxic cocktail that threatens the nation's health.

Headaches, nausea, sleeplessness and exhaustion are thought to be just a few of the symptoms of today's most topical medical condition, Credit Crunch Stress.

Already there are reports of increased levels of depression and tension headaches, not to mention health problems associated with economising, like skipping meals, cancelling gym memberships and drowning sorrows with alcohol.

Recently, 39-year-old postman Duncan Wilby from Yorkshire became one of the early fatalities of the current economic crisis. It was reported that, apparently troubled by financial problems, he took his own life.

Dr Nick Read, a physician and psychotherapist who specialises in stress-related conditions is just one expert predicting the medical profession may soon see a surge in illness caused by money worries.

He says: "The current situation with growing financial uncertainty and anxiety about the future is bound to impact on people's health. Many will feel overwhelmed and worried that they can't cope.

"So doctors may well see more and more people exhibiting symptoms which are triggered by stress such as back pain, breathlessness, muscular tensions, and gut complaints.

"Stress also exacerbates existing illnesses like eczema, asthma, arthritis and migraines."

He estimates that currently around 50 per cent of patients visiting doctors have illnesses which cannot be diagnosed or properly treated

By **GABRIELLE FAGAN**

but whose origin is stress.

Stress hormones have a range of damaging effects on the body. Adrenalin increases inflammation, makes pain worse and ties the guts in knots. Cortisol raises blood sugar and blood pressure, makes infections worse and induces obesity and exhaustion.

Sleep deprivation caused by money worries is already, according to research, affecting those in particularly vulnerable professions – estate agents, lorry drivers and taxi drivers.

They are enjoying less sleep – only at best six hours a night – than those in other professions and trades, found a survey by Travelodge.

Its findings are backed by new research by sleep aid, Sominex, which discovered that a third of those it surveyed had disturbed nights because of money worries and a further third toss and turn over job worries.

Dr Wendy Denning, director of an integrated health centre in London points out: "Although our physical welfare has a massive impact on how we feel and behave, ironically it's often neglected in times of stress.

"Even simple things can help. For instance when we're stressed we breathe less efficiently and take more shallow breaths, which doesn't get enough oxygen to our brain and body. Deep breathing exercises could improve that."

Soothing sleep

Dr Denning's advice is, don't work until you're literally too tired to do any more as you'll be too exhausted to switch off sufficiently to rest, and avoid watching television late at night as it stimulates the brain.

Sex and the City

Scottish scientists reportedly found that sex

isn't just an effective stress reliever for a short time – but that the benefits of one session helped to keep stress at bay for up to a week.

Unfortunately anxiety and stress is known to reduce libido. Dr Denning says: 'Relaxation techniques can help, but talk about any problems with your partner or seek advice from a specialist.'

Don't panic

Panic attacks may be a symptom of stress and anxiety. These can last for a brief period of around 15 minutes and feature a range of symptoms including dizziness, nausea, sweating and a racing heart.

Among the treatments which can be recommended by a GP is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which involves weekly sessions where the sufferer talks to a therapist. There are also self-help tips, including breathing techniques.

Beat the blues

Low mood as well as feeling more irritable, forgetful, and finding it harder to concentrate can all be symptoms of stress, says Dr Denning.

She recommends a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement to boost the body as stress may deplete levels of key vitamins like B and C, and magnesium and zinc.

Face reality

Fear of what may happen in the future is a major factor in raising stress levels, according to Richard Hilliard, director of the Relaxation for Living Institute.

He said: "Make a plan. Bridge the gap between where you are now and where you want to be by creating actions that move you towards your goal. Feel good about yourself when you achieve even small steps and try to appreciate the positive things in your life."

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To see this clip, search 'recycling'
@ yourkenttv.co.uk



We look at how you can both make and save money by recycling in this KOS Media credit crunch special film

Essential guide to where you can save

- Farleys Furniture store in Ramsgate is offering 10 per cent off all lift and rise chairs and motion beds
- Kingfisher Blinds in Ashford is offering motorised blinds for just £149 inc VAT
- Holiday Inn Express Hotel in Ramsgate is offering rooms at £49.95 per night including bed and breakfast and free parking
- H & H Flooring in Deal is offering an extra 10 per cent off all carpets
- KOS is offering a set of Bypass and anvil secateurs for just £16.99 save £10

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

Stop burning your money

Changing energy suppliers is a lot easier than you think

CHANGING energy suppliers has received a lot of bad press over the years.

Tales of unscrupulous door-to-door salesmen signing you up without your knowledge and the myths which surround the actual process have made many steer clear.

Yet the reality is, the process should be quick, simple and save you potentially hundreds of pounds during the course of the year.

Firstly, let's dispel the biggest myth of them all. Changing supplier will involve no new pipes, and no hassle.

From your point of view the only difference will be a different company's name appearing at the top of your monthly bill – and less money leaving your bank account.

All you have to do is identify who you want to supply you with energy and notify them and settle up with your current supplier. There will be no break in your supply and all existing equipment will remain the same.

But crucially, do your research – and don't be

By **CHRIS BRITCHER**

hassled by a salesman either on the phone or your doorstep if you don't feel comfortable. Remember, it's your business they want and you're in control of who you give it to. If you're not sure, or are getting confused, simply tell them you'll think about it and thank them for their time. Sign nothing unless you are certain you want to change supplier.

Special offers

Fortunately, with the internet it has never been easier to compare the price of gas and electricity, find out the reputation of companies and hear of problems other customers have had.

Suppliers frequently have online special offers too – cutting prices further simply by switching to an account you monitor via the web.

Independent comparison websites such as uSwitch.com and Moneysupermarket.com are particularly useful. At the click of a mouse



HOT TIP: Find the cheapest energy prices online using a comparison website

they can guide you to the best prices so you can make your own decision.

Scott Byrom, is utilities manager at Moneysupermarket.com. He explained: "Energy bills are well over the £1,000 mark and while the energy giants may cut prices in the coming weeks, changing to a cheaper tariff is something I highly recommend.

"With so many people needing to tighten their purse strings, a saving of almost £1,800 on average could make all the difference. Changing to an online tariff also gives consumers the opportunity to keep track of their payments and have a clearer idea of their balance by managing their account online. As well as swapping from standard to online, changing payment method to monthly direct debit will also guarantee savings."

But you may not even need to change suppliers to achieve noticeable and useful savings. Speak to your current supplier and discuss with them your usage. It is possible simply switching to a different tariff could save you pounds.

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For some it's only a small downturn

SMEs can be adaptable in rapidly changing markets

SMALL is beautiful was a big catchphrase a few decades ago, but it's certainly come into its own since our economy has taken a downturn.

What are referred to as SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) often have the agility to react more swiftly to rapidly-changing market conditions than large corporations – rather like how tiny mammals survived when lumbering dinosaurs perished millions of years ago.

In a downturn markets shrink and anyone forking out cash wants value for money. So firms have to work smarter, not just faster. Creative bosses will be asking staff for ideas which could work for the whole team's benefit.

Also, many outfits think that shedding staff can be a good way of cutting costs – it can be, but it's first got to be thought out very carefully.

'Last in, first out' doesn't work any more

By **TONY PATEY**

when you're considering making redundancies because that could land you with an expensive claim for discrimination.

Simon Morgan of Dartford-based HR Dept warns that redundancy is never an easy option, and it needs to be handled properly if it is going to make a positive, rather than negative, impact on your business.

"Many SMEs use redundancy as a way of dealing with a poor performer but this is the surest way to make the dismissal unfair.

"How you choose who to lose when there is more than one person doing the same role has to be decided by an objective selection criteria and consulting with all staff affected at every stage of the proceedings.

"In addition to completing the redundancy process on the right side of the law, you need to think about the rest of your workforce.

"Being left with a smaller team who may be

anxious about their own job security or, even worse, who harbour ill-feeling towards senior management, may negate the positive effects you were hoping for with a smaller, more tightly knit team."

When it comes to finance there's little real helpful advice to give. It depends on each individual firm now, because the banks have drawn in their horns and treat any loan or overdraft request with a beady eye.

But, every bank has stressed to me that firms which have been good customers in the past and come up with good business plans or ideas will get a fair hearing – and stories I've done recently in the Business section of Saturday Observer and Kent on Sunday have backed up this claim.

Now's a good time for firms to check out leases and rentals on properties – to see if it's possible to negotiate any new terms.

It's a buyers' market in commercial property at the moment, so companies seeking new premises should be able to work out some very favourable deals.



Essential guide to where you can save

- GG Racing in Ashford is offering £10 off a 1/400th share
- Cox & Son furniture and soft furnishings store in Ramsgate is offering free checks, measures and hangs on curtains
- Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off decorative flooring
- County Bed Company in Tonbridge is offering 10 per cent off any headboard when purchased with a bed
- Robins and Day Motors in Maidstone is offering free winter health checks (normal RRP £19.99)
- Something Old Something New in Westgate-on-Sea is offering 10 per cent off when you spend over £100
- Winter Gardens Theatre in Margate is offering discount theatre tickets
- St Lawrence Tavern pub and restaurant in Ramsgate is offering buy one main course and get one free
- Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering £2 off the full ticket price for Burns night/Pink tribute night or ultimate Swing Night
- Spand Motors in Hythe is offering a free mini valet with any full service
- KOS – Experience the natural comfort, warmth and luxury of a traditional feather mattress with the innovative mattress topper from only £39.99 save over 50 per cent. Various sizes available

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Going bargain hunting has never been easier – just click and save

By **TOM BETTS**

AS OUR bank balances are squeezed by the credit crunch, some financial experts suggest turning to the internet to make the pennies stretch further.

The savings that can be found online could make the read-out on the ATM screen that little bit more bearable... if you are computersavvy enough to hunt them down.

While the large supermarket chains find more and more ways to reduce the retail price of their stock, web stores have also had to offer great deals to keep customers spending.

The obvious places to start are the price comparison sites, of which there are many.

The cheapest possible charges on everything from car insurance to Nintendo Wiis can be found on sites such as moneysupermarket.com and kelkoo.co.uk.

The process can be time-consuming, but is worthwhile as huge savings can be made.

Talking to people around the county, the message was clear.

Matthew Bates, 33, from Whitstable said: "I brought a new iPod 8BG Nano with my Christmas money on the net, and used Kelkoo to find it.

"What would have cost me more than £100 on the high street cost £84 on the net."

So much for luxuries, but with winter doing



SCREEN SAVER: Online shopping can really help you save your hard-earned money

its worst, the cost of your energy bills is worth looking at.

Click on energyhelpline.com or uswitch.com to set about making pound-saving changes.

Lorraine Pattola, 27, from Westgate-on-Sea, found that by switching energy supplier via the web, she saved more than £50 on her last bill.

She said: "I thought our bills from EDF were outrageous, so I used the web to shop around for a new supplier. My housemates appreciated

it, too. I haven't made a cup of tea in weeks!"

And with the cost of mobile phones burning a hole in people's pockets, communicating with your friends can also be made cheaper.

Samuel Clarke from Herne Bay is 28 and has just bought his first home in the town.

Accordingly, he has had to curtail his spending dramatically.

Despite having a love of gadgets and technology, he switched to a pay-as-you-go mobile and increasingly used the internet to make contact with friends.

He said: "I use email much more now and I even joined Facebook, which I once vowed I'd never do. It has saved me money on things like texting and my phone bill has come down by around £15 a month."

Saving money on your groceries by shopping online is also easier than it looks.

The running total counters keep track of what you are spending and help to curtail impulse buys.

The dreaded delivery charge has come down, too, with retailers like Tesco now charging just £1.75 for midweek drops – and you don't spend money on petrol driving to the store.

If you're prepared to swallow your pride and buy second-hand, eBay also comes into its own as a cash-saving resource.

Books, CDs and DVDs, and pretty much everything else, are a steal if you are prepared to play the waiting game until the goods arrive.

One trick is to buy cheap films from shops like WH Smith, which often sell for as little as £3, and sell them on at roughly the same price.

A film for free, unlike renting from a store!

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Theatre Royal in Margate is offering two tickets for £20 (normally £14 each) for The Jives Aces on March 20 at 7.30pm,

■ Southern Antennae aerial and satellite shop in Broadstairs is offering 20 per cent off any service it provides

■ Thanet Leisure Force in Margate and Ramsgate is offering £50 off a family membership package. Discount available against annual payment or can be used for DD memberships against joining fee and daily rate payable in advance

■ Oliver Carpets in Ramsgate and Herne Bay is offering 10 per cent off when you spend over £250

■ Lexterton furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £300 off all dining suite orders over £2000

■ GC Stevens & Son, garden machinery and woodstoves store in Sittingbourne is offering 10 per cent off stoves and complete flue systems

■ Lenleys in Canterbury is offering an extra five per cent off sale prices on furniture, sofas and beds

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering free underlay upgrade on all carpets

■ Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone is offering two for one comedy nights

■ KOS is offering a pressure washer kit £99.99 including free accessories save £116 on RRP

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Are you in control of your staffing costs?



PEOPLE PERSON: Director Tara Lloyd

SMALL businesses struggling to maintain their cash flow in the economic downturn should make sure they properly manage all of their people costs.

Ashford-based people management expert Calibre HR & Training said there are often opportunities for improving staffing efficiencies, but too few small businesses have the necessary understanding of the whole staffing picture – and so aren't well placed to secure cost savings.

Director Tara Lloyd said: "The wages bill is one of the largest financial commitments for any business. When times are tough businesses of all sizes need to know where and when costs will be incurred.

"However, small businesses routinely overlook some people costs and fail to have a proper grip on the full cost implications of their decisions. And the consequences can be catastrophic."

Businesses need to know both their total committed staff costs – including overlooked items such as cover for holidays and other absences, bonuses and deferred pay rises – as well as what flexibility they have to revamp operations to match demand.

Said Ms Lloyd: "For ultimate flexibility, employers need to understand the employment status of every staff member and the terms of engagement of contractors and agency staff."

By TOM BETTS

In addition, Ms Lloyd says people costs are often underestimated at both ends of the employment relationship.

"It can be easy to assume recruitment costs will be nil during a recession, but people continue to move jobs and if you are aiming to counter the effects of the downturn you should be taking advantage of the new talent on the market.

"So look closely at your recruitment methods to ensure the best value for money. Similarly, businesses planning to reduce or restructure the workforce need a proper understanding of redundancy costs and the role of professional support in managing the process professionally and avoiding litigation."

HR financial planning – what to include:

- All wage costs
- Cover for holidays and other absences
- Benefits – cars, food subsidies, life assurance, pensions, health cover, staff discounts and private health insurance, etc
- Pay rises and bonuses (including deferred)
- Recruitment costs
- Training
- Unclaimed Statutory Sick Pay
- Redundancy payments
- Professional HR support

Free people management fact sheets are available at www.calibrehr.com.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Farleys furniture store in Ramsgate is offering a free dishwasher with every kitchen order placed over £7,000

■ Kingfisher Blinds in Ashford is offering one motorised blind either vertical or roller free when you spend over £1,500

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering free accessories with all laminate flooring

■ Spand Motors in Hythe is offering a free mini valet with any full service

■ Theatre Royal in Margate is offering The Barber of Saville Row, January 30, two tickets for one top price ticket (£15 each)

■ The Captain Digby pub and restaurant in Broadstairs is offering a free kid's meal from the pirates menu with every adult meal ordered from the restaurant menu

■ Southern Antennae in Broadstairs is offering £25 off a high gain digital aerial

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering 20 per cent off in the Verve Grill or Victory Pub

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £100 off elevating TV cabinets

■ Acorns health and fitness in Chatham is offering a third off gym membership

■ KOS is offering a Pulsar Kinetic Watch only £49.99 (inc p&p) no battery required, saving over 50 per cent on RRP

■ Morris & Turner in Medway is offering an extra £10 off Taurus vanity units and basins

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Reducing your carbon footprint and your bills

WE can all make changes at work and at home which will help reduce our carbon footprints – and save us money during the credit crunch.

There's lots that can be done, and a main focus is climate change, which is highlighted in a new report from the Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, which is the only organisation seeking to protect the countryside as a whole.

It's called 'Tomorrow's Kent', and is available on CPRE Kent's website, and shows how climate change will affect our county and what steps we can take.

Loans

A rapidly growing number of homeowners are now taking advantage of local council loans and government grants to install solar panels, wind turbines and other microgeneration technologies in their homes.

You may initially feel a large-scale renovation project in your home may seem uneconomical, but renewable energy technologies such as wood burners that provide heating and hot water, or solar water heating panels, will pay for themselves in the long term.

While oil prices may have come down for the moment, everything suggests that high heating costs are here to stay, unless we look for alternatives.

BY GEMMA WATTS

There are many other practical steps you can take to reduce the amount of energy you use in your home. By simply replacing old lightbulbs with energy saving ones you can reduce your energy costs.

If your boiler is more than 10 years old then think seriously about getting a new, more efficient one. It should keep you warmer for a lot less money.

Improving the insulation of your home doesn't have the 'eco-bling' attraction of a solar panel or a wind turbine, but it can save you money, and reduce your carbon footprint, far more effectively.

For impartial advice on what is available in your area and what you can do, contact the Energy Savings Trust (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk or phone 0800 512 012).

CPRE Kent is holding an 'Alternative Energy Event' in Tunbridge Wells on January 24. There will be a range of speakers giving presentations on how alternative energy can work with protecting the countryside, listed buildings and conservation areas.

For more information visit the website www.cprekent.org.uk or call 01303 815180.

Take action now to protect Kent from climate change and start saving on your bills.

• *Gemma Watts is publicity officer of the Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.*



COST EFFECTIVE: (top to bottom) solar panels; insulation; and energy bulbs

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Lindsay's Driver Training in Hythe is offering a Learner Driver starter pack for only £95 which includes four lessons, theory training DVD Rom, Highway Code, Theory Q&A book, £60 pass plus discount (for under 20s) Young marmalade kit (low car insurance and cars for new drivers)

■ GC Stevens & Son, garden machinery and woodstoves store in Sittingbourne is offering £10 off Honda mower servicing and £20 off Honda and Husqvarna ride on mower servicing

■ Clarkes Furnishers in Maidstone is offering a free power upgrade. Pay for a manual recliner and upgrade to a power version free. G Plan upholstery

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £300 off upholstery orders over £1,500

■ The Fireplace in Sittingbourne is offering 10 per cent off

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering 50 per cent off its Sunday night pasta buffet

■ Thanet Leisure Force in Margate and Ramsgate is offering £100 off joining fee. At any Thanet leisure force fitness studio when you sign up to any membership package

■ Farleys furniture store in Ramsgate is offering half price duvets and pillows with every bed purchased

■ KOS is offering a porous seepage hose. It saves time and money uses up to 70 per cent less water. From only £19.99, save £35 on RRP

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IT USED to be dig for victory, but now we could say it's dig for survival...

Growing your own vegetables and generally shopping sensibly can save a lot of money. So rather than just cruising supermarket aisles picking up whatever takes your fancy, and getting a shock at the check-out, plan your campaign.

Part of that attack could be just growing your own herbs and some vegetables – or even getting an allotment for a bigger crop – and also making sure you spot the food and drink bargains in a variety of stores, from the biggies to cornershops.

For example, try and buy large bags of onions or potatoes rather than smaller amounts; you'll find that if they're kept in a cool, dry, shaded place they'll last ages.

Also, cultivate your local butcher. If you're a regular customer, you could, for example, ask for a 'bargain pack' of meat if you give them say £30 or £40 cash. Again, it'll save in the long run and last ages – and it'll stock up your freezer.

Plan meals

Plan meals a week ahead, and shop just for the items you need – that way, no food will go to waste and you'll be less tempted by unnecessary bits.

At the supermarket go for the 'own brands' – which are often just a difference in packaging, and a lot cheaper.

Budget supermarkets such as Lidl also do an incredible range of fruit juices, including pear and peach, which are extremely healthy, cheap and long dated. They're usually packed with vitamin C and very tasty.

Taking sandwiches and some fruit for lunch at work will save pounds each week, and you won't be tempted by fast food or cream cakes. Drink water instead of expensive and calorie-packed fizzies.

Use up leftovers – for example, vegetables can be used as a 'bubble and squeak' the next day, and meat can be used for sandwiches.

And if you make things like lasagne, stew



VEGGIE FEAST: Growing your own food and shopping sensibly can help your finances

Healthy ways to save allot of cash

and shepherd's pie, make much more than you need so you can then freeze small portions for the future.

Finally, try and grow your own vegetables. Not only will it keep you fit, but the taste of something you have grown yourself is very satisfying.

If you're new to gardening, get some how-to books from the local library – you'll find loads on the shelves – and the weekly gardening

magazines carry masses of topical tips and suggestions.

Cultivating anything from a small patch in your back garden to a full-scale allotment will give you an extremely worthwhile hobby which will certainly stay with you even when the recession becomes a memory.

This time of year, you'll find bargains and big discounts in garden centres for a whole range of gardening items, from mowers to gloves.

To see this clip, search 'driving'
@ yourkenttv.co.uk



According to one driving instructor, we could all change our driving habits and see a 39 per cent fuel saving

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Holiday Inn Express in Ramsgate is offering conference room hire for £95 per day including LCD projector, flipchart, pens and one round of coffee plus free parking

■ GG Racing in Ashford is offering £40 off a 1/100th share in racing shares

■ Elephant Windows in Ramsgate is offering £100 off with any order placed over £2,000

■ A & A Gliderobes in Canterbury is offering up to £100 off

■ Kentish Hardwood in Rainham is offering 10 per cent off carpets

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THE FIREPLACE

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Draught in

We decided to get some help this winter to make our home more eco-friendly while cutting down on high heating costs...

By **KATE HODAL**

ing bill, which would save us roughly 20 per cent per month on our electricity bill.

We also made sure to cap its temperature at 60C, so as not to overheat the water and suffer the economic consequences later.

Radiators

Many of the radiators in the house are placed under windows, for instance in the kitchen, bathroom and some bedrooms, meaning that up to 70 per cent of the heat is lost straight through the glass above or through the outside wall.

"This can be corrected by installing a shelf above the radiator, which will block the heat from escaping up through the window," Donnachadh explained.

"By installing a reflector panel, you'll reflect the heat into the room rather than leak it into the wall behind it."

We've found that it also helps to draw the curtains at night, which none of us had paid much attention to. By turning rooms into small boxes, and ensuring the curtains are drawn, doors closed and radiators turned on, our house has become a hodgepodge of warm rooms, rather than an airy hallway whereby one can wander in and out of spaces that are, as a result, freezing cold.



Fireplaces

Our next stop was to take a look at the fireplaces. Donnachadh reckons that up to 15 per cent of the central heating in a room can be lost up an unsealed fireplace.

Our house might boast five gorgeous fireplaces, but they certainly make a room cold.

After investing in a chimney balloon, which set me back £19.99, my room became five degrees warmer and there was no longer a draught between the chimney and the door to my room.

Doors

Donnachadh said: "Take a look at your front door," he said ominously, stepping over the threshold.

He pointed out a draughty letterbox, which was letting cold air into our hallway day and night. "Most people don't realise the effect of draught in a door frame like this."

"Get yourself some strip insulation and a

Heating

It has charm, but our house is also large, draughty and badly insulated. While we might be slightly ahead of the rest of Britain by subscribing to a green electricity tariff, we've still been using way too much of it.

I discovered that by replacing the boiler with a newer model we could save around 20 per cent on our gas bills and keep the house heated more efficiently.

But the possibility of my landlord buying us a whole new one was low, so Donnachadh talked instead about how we were actually using the boiler.

Our boiler is set on a timer, with separate controls for the central heating and hot water. But we still had the hot water on longer than we needed it – we were able to shave off three hours per day from our heat-

the expert to go green

"Get yourself some strip insulation and a draught-proof letter box, and your hallway will warm up in no time," he added.

"A doorbrush would help the gap at the bottom of the door, and a door curtain would also stop any drafts from coming into the house."

Donnachadh's next step was to take a look at our kitchen door, with its keyhole allowing a permanent shaft of air coming into the room.

He told us that putting tape over the keyhole on the outside would prevent cold air from coming in.

Things to look out for: door gaps, drafts



from cracks, air coming through keyholes, broken locks and draughty letterboxes.

Solutions: draught excluders, taping keyholes, fixing locks and getting draught-resistant letterboxes.

Floors

Our drafty house's wooden floorboards once supported plush carpet. While its since been ripped up, the boards themselves have not changed since the house was built in the 1870s.

Well worn, they are incredibly draughty, with no insulation protecting them from the cold cellar air blowing from below.

"This is a source of a large amount of your heat loss and needs to be dealt with urgently," Donnachadh said, reckoning that a whopping 15 per cent of our home's heat loss was going through the floor.

By filling in the floorboard gaps and nailing wood fibre insulation board to the cellar ceiling, we should be a lot warmer, he says.

Things to look out for: holes.

Solutions: plug the holes with floor filler (available from hardware stores) and insulation board.

Windows

A crack as small as 2mm around a window can let in as much cold air as leaving the window open 8cm, so it's essential to make sure your windows fit well.

The windows in our kitchen and living room had gaps large enough to stick pencils through, and air vents in the toilets were either left open or were broken.

After blocking up the vents with some strip



insulation and recycled cardboard, we found the toilet and kitchen now felt 100 times warmer.

Our next step was to look at the sash windows in our house, whose draughts needed blocking with draught excluders along the sides and in between the window frames.

Donnachadh also noted that installing curtains on the kitchen windows would help even more, as would drawing our bedroom curtains (and having them thermally lined, or at least double-lined) with Velcro, to ensure their complete closure at night.

Things to look out for: broken locks, draughts coming in between the panes or between the pane and frame.

Solutions: strip insulation, fixing the locks, heavy curtains.

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By KATE WHITING

THE credit crunch has been blamed for a lot of things – repossession, redundancies and the demise of Woolworths – but in recent weeks it has also hit the headlines for reigniting Britain's sex lives.

Sales of condoms have shot up according to Superdrug.

It seems that more and more couples are opting for a steamy night in rather than splashing their cash on a night on the tiles, and some experts are predicting a baby boom next year as a result.

"We've seen a phenomenal rise in the sales of products designed to enhance sexual pleasures and a rise in the sales of condoms compared to this time last year," says Melanie Wilson, Superdrug's healthcare buyer.

"Over the past four weeks we have also seen sales of pregnancy testing kits rise every week – so we'll expect to see sales of nappies rocket later this year."

A recent survey by YouGov named sex as the nation's favourite free activity ahead of window shopping and gossiping, but as with some other trends, we've seen it all before.

Research shows that economic slumps in the past, including during the 70s and the early 90s, caused the birth rate to rise, so could we be set for another baby boom?

"No," says Netmums co-founder Siobhan Freegard.

"We tend to have mums on our website who are already pregnant and already have children, and from their point of view, I would say the credit crunch is probably having the opposite effect in that we're finding mums who would like to have a child are actually holding off and saying 'I'm really worried about my husband's job' or 'it's another mouth to feed'.

"Also people who had hoped to have another

Why we're finding the credit crunch a turn on

Most headlines about the credit crunch were depressing and gloomy, until news broke that the recession has made us all have more sex. We ask the experts about the story behind the headlines, whether it will lead to a baby boom and reveal why sex is good for you

baby and move house, for more room, are not able to do that, so they're actually holding back and saying 'we're going to wait and see how things pan out.'

While sales of condoms are increasing, it could well be that people are more worried about getting pregnant and are taking more care with contraception, rather than that they're actually having more sex.

Regardless of whether there will be a baby boom, it certainly seems the nation's sex life is having a healthy surge. That's no bad thing, says relationship expert Paula Hall.

"I've seen the statistics saying condom sales have increased, so unless they're all being used as water balloons, it seems couples are having more sex," she says.

"Certainly I've seen a number of couples who can't afford to go out and do the things they do normally and they're deciding they need to find cheaper forms of entertainment. Staying at home and enjoying themselves sexually is certainly something I'd recommend to help their relationship."



HOME ENTERTAINMENT: More couples are opting for a steamy night in to save money

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Family Fun Weekend with Jousting 19 – 20 September

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Don't dispute it

BY TONY PATEY

WITH lay-offs and cost-saving happening in a lot of companies, many workers feel unsafe and edgy.

This is often the time when disputes which are really tea-cup storms become full-blown disagreements.

This is where Acas comes in. It has been part of the industrial landscape for years – in the past it figured in all the big disputes between unions and bosses.

It used to be called by its full name of Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, but now it's just known by its acronym.

But, although it's involved in all aspects of employment disputes, a key part of its work is mediation – and it's this part which grabbed the headlines years ago when its delegates used to sit down between some tough bargainers on both sides.

Acas has launched a new line of attack, urging employers and employees to resolve any disputes in the workplace rather than going for expensive employment tribunals.

Acas South East senior advisor Sarah Vintner said: "Mediation aims to get people talking together, in a constructive way, so they can sort out their differences.

"Obviously this isn't easy, especially if people haven't been getting on well for some time and have built up very negative pictures of each other.

"That's why the mediation approach we use is quite structured and provides clear ground rules so that people feel as safe as they possibly can.

"That way they are more willing to open up and be honest about what is bothering them."

The mediator first meets each person separately so that there is confidence that the Acas delegate is not there to judge who is right or wrong, and then the process starts.

Ms Vintner said: "A typical scenario for mediation is where two work colleagues have such different personalities and working styles that they each regard the other as rude and unhelpful, sometimes leading to allegations of bullying and harassment.

"A situation which, if left without any attempt to help those two people talk to each other properly, could result in grievances and ultimately disciplinary action as their behaviour begins to breach company standards.

"The typical mediation outcome of such a case is respect and understanding of each other, increased self-awareness and agreements about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours."



FREE book to help your firm

STEP up, folks – here is a FREE book to help firms with their marketing. But you'd better be quick because it's a limited offer.

It's designed to help businesses increase the effectiveness of their marketing, has just been released and is called "Why most marketing doesn't work and how you can fix it...."

Author, business specialist Dean Garland, said: "For most businesses, the quickest way to climb out of the recession and improve their fortunes lies in their ability to use effective marketing tactics.

"Unfortunately, most business owners find that their marketing isn't working as they would like, but have no way of knowing why this is the case."

This comprehensive 99-page book solves this problem and is FREE to KOS Media readers when they enter or mention Kent on Sunday when they go to <http://www.marketingfixit.co.uk/> or call 0844 4480 670 – but only 50 copies are available.

The book has been designed to create a quick win for those aiming to generate more money from their business and get an excellent return on their marketing spending with:

- 31 examples of proven marketing campaigns which have generated millions of pounds for small business owners including detailed

summaries on why each one worked

- Why your 'message' has to include the '8 marketing assets'

- How to side-step the competition and eliminate them from the minds of your prospects and customers (without reducing your prices).

Mr Garland, of Rapid Results Marketing, said: "By knowing what marketing to use in certain situations and how to put it into action will be a key skill if small business owners are going to keep their ship afloat during the current economic climate.

"Unfortunately, there are millions of business owners throughout the UK who struggle with this element of their business. I think this is typically because they don't have enough time to dedicate to it and they lack the necessary know-how."

The Book also includes 7 Essential 'Marketing Fix-It Lessons'. All you have to do to receive the book for FREE is to enter the reference number 136 or just type Kent on Sunday along with your contact details. After doing so, you'll be able to get instant access to the book straight from the website. If you'd prefer, phone 0844 4480 070 and give your name, address, telephone number and email address and you'll be sent an email giving you immediate access to the book.

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This is the year to be shrewd – or you could be paying a heavy price

IT WAS left to national treasure Robert Peston, the BBC reporter whose strangulated tones guided us through the big financial crises of 2008, to highlight the ironies of a year none would have predicted 12 months ago.

At this stage in the credit crunch, he noted, savers and careful investors who usually come out well in a recession, are carrying the can and showing hefty losses – while many bankers, who caused much of the trouble, got themselves refinanced just in time to collect Christmas bonuses.

Great deals

After a turnaround like that, how can we survive 2009, a year billed in advance as one of the grimdest in years?

Here's a New Year medley of tips:

- Always keep within the authorised overdraft limit on your bank account.

The average authorised interest rate is 14.48 per cent, while the average cost of unauthorised debit interest is over 60 per cent more expensive.

• Beware of too many bargains: "You run the risk of buying things you don't need", says Gill Wrigley of Tenon Recovery, "so keep a check on what you spend and keep to your list."

• Slash those mobile phone bills: James Parker, mobiles and broadband manager at

BY JEREMY GATES

Moneysupermarket.com, says great value SIM-only deals will catch on in 2009.

"Asda and Ikea have already entered the market from the High Street and 2009 should see more big names joining the fray", he says.

"With the market for SIM-only becoming ever more competitive, we should see some great deals for consumers."

- Guard against the sack: Emma Walker, head of protection at Moneysupermarket.com, thinks rising job losses will make payment protection insurance (PPI) for loans and mortgages a "major focus for 2009".

- Homebuyers will be "increasingly happy" to switch to Standard Variable Rate (SVR) mortgages at the end of a fix, says Louise Cuming, head of mortgages at Moneysupermarket.com. However, Cuming fears "a flurry of conditions imposed by lenders to prevent borrowers from benefiting from the SVR rate will continue".

- Take trouble to find top savings rates: Kevin Mountford, head of savings at Moneysupermarket.com, says "a couple of new providers will enter the market – good news for consumers as it will help to keep the new breed of super banks on their toes."

"There will be a gap between best and average accounts, so savers must be vigilant."

- Loans will get dearer: Tim Moss, head of loans at Moneysupermarket.com, says rising defaults on repayments, and banks making

less money from PPI will result in higher APRs. He thinks rates could hit 12 per cent, the level of five years ago, after several years in single figures, with only 'prime' customers getting unsecured loans.

- Equity release catches on: Anthony Rafferty at Norwich Union says 2009 will see the start of products sold via major banks and building societies to older homeowners keen to turn bricks and mortar into ready cash.

- Look to save on home and car insurance: Simon Lambie at Confused.com reckons the average saving by the website's customers in 2008 was £186 on home insurance, and £208 on motor cover.

Decent return

- Look to pay down the mortgage with any spare cash: Simon Lambie at Confused.com says a £100,000 borrower on a 25-year repayment loan, with an interest rate of five per cent, saves over £12,200 in interest payments by overpaying by £50 per month. They would also cut the repayment period by three-and-a-half years.

- Don't be afraid to spend: Geoff Tresman, chairman of Punter Southall Financial Management says: "Wherever possible, pay down debt. It could get expensive in 2009."

- If you have the money, I would suggest you spend some of it in 2009 – on electrical equipment, white goods, clothes, available at prices last seen 25 years ago."

- Long-term savers might get a decent return by buying a traded endowment policy,

which the original owner is selling well ahead of maturity. Brian Goldstein, chairman of The Association of Policy Market Makers claims latest figures show these policies returning an average 8.3 per cent a year over 25 years, much better than saving accounts and shares in the current climate.

- Serious savers are likely to find corporate bonds – issued by companies to raise funds – will be the most rewarding asset class in 2009, says investment director Rob Pemberton at wealth manager HFM Columbus.

- Flat owners might try to extend their lease, says Philip Rowland, leasehold specialist at Sussex-based law firm Adams & Remers.

Rowland said: "In a market where selling property is difficult, it makes sense for flat owners to protect their investment by using their statutory rights to extend their lease."

- Pay off more than the minimum on credit card debts, says Simon Lambie at Confused.com. "If customers pay only the minimum – ie, two per cent on a £5,000 balance each month, on an interest rate of 15 per cent, it would take 463 months (over 38 years) to repay the original amount, plus interest of £7,652."

"Pay an extra £50 per month, and the pay-back period falls to 73 months, with interest only £2,009", says Mr Lambie.

No doubt you've noticed a common theme running through these tips: 2009 is the year when you take a keen interest in money and understand exactly where it's going. If not, you could pay a heavy price.



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Word on the street is...



MARKET stall owner **Steve Humble** said: "It's affected everyone. People are definitely cutting back on non-essentials and things are difficult."

"I've had to cut back on other things too. I used to employ two members of staff, and unfortunately I had to let one go."

"We have also had to cut out visiting markets where we have to drive a long way due to petrol costs, and this year I will be taking a one week holiday instead of two weeks."



CANTERBURY street cleaner **Matthew Cole** said: "I'm getting by, but my family are having to budget much more carefully than we were before; everything from food to gas bills."

"And whereas you used to look forward to holidays and nights out and things like that, now we have to be a lot more careful."

"But it's just a question of budgeting better. I'm lucky because I'm in a fairly secure job that is paid weekly."



LORD mayor's chauffeur **Laurence Dunderdale** said: "So far it hasn't affected us that badly. Obviously, like everyone else we are keeping an eye on the bills, things like the

We visited Canterbury to find out how all of you are dealing with the credit crunch

utilities and food, but so far we are doing OK."

"I'm semi-retired, but I have two part-time jobs – I'm the Lord Mayor of Canterbury's chauffeur and bursar of an alms house charity."

"We're also keeping an eye on our investments, and we've moved a couple to get better rates."



OWNER of Marlowe Florists **John Scanlon** said: "The walk-in sales have dried up completely; the £6 to £10 casual market is dead – those few quid are staying in people's pockets now."

"People are still buying the big bouquets for people's birthdays and things like that, because they have to. If a husband forgets his wife's birthday he's in trouble."

"But if it wasn't for people dying, getting married, or having birthdays I don't know what we'd do."

"I'm selling a quarter of what I'd normally sell from walk-in sales. The business used to be 50-50 between walk-in and pre-ordered."

THE Lunatic Fringe manager **Steve Wallace** said: "We are alright, but it's depressing to see other places going under when you're doing

OK yourself."

"We have a good number of regular clients who come in every four to six weeks, and Christmas was busy so now in January and the beginning of February we're getting a lot of people in again."

"People always want their hair cut, especially now spring is coming, and people are thinking about a restyle. We are a ray of light."



JUSTIN Weston, owner of the Secret Café, said: "I'm doing OK. Before Christmas I was really feeling the pinch, so I brought in a new credit crunch menu."

"I did away with the restaurant side of it, and pared it back to only selling things on the specials board – a couple of mains and a couple of choices of soup."

"Now I have a regular stream of customers, but they all come in to eat because it's cheaper. It's more of a café than a coffee shop now."

"In times like these every business needs a strategy and mine was to cut the prices on food."

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone is offering two for one offer on music nights tickets normally £12 each, now two tickets for £12

■ H & H Flooring in Deal is offering an extra 10 per cent off all carpets

■ Deco 5, wine bar and gallery in Whitstable is offering 20 per cent off food all day Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Light tapas-style menu

■ Cox & Son, furniture and soft furnishings store in Ramsgate is offering interest-free credit on all carpet orders over £1,000

■ Angel Nail Studio in Ramsgate is offering first full set of acrylic nails for £22 and first infill's half price

■ Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off carpets

■ Avinco Limited in Ramsgate is offering 15 per cent off aerial installation

■ Bourne Road Garage in Crayford is offering free car mats with all Mazda purchases new and used

■ Carpets 4 Less in Ashford is offering 10 per cent off carpets, rugs, vinyls, laminate and wood floors

■ Clarkes Furnishers in Maidstone is offering bed bargains – buy a 5ft divan set and pay only the sale price of a 4ft 6in

■ KOS is offering Snugfit mattress topper from Slumberdown from only £69.99, save up to £40. Various sizes available

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Recipe to beat tough times

Staying in is the new going out, but feeding a crowd can end up costing a packet. Fiona Beckett, author of *The Frugal Cook*, shows how to feed your friends without breaking the bank

BY LUCY CORRY

WHEN it's cold and bleak outside, I love having people over for dinner.

They're always grateful to be fed, it's a chance to cook something more exciting than the usual weekday pasta and sauce combo, and it's a good way to return favours or get to know people better.

But unless you're careful, entertaining at home can be a fast-track to economic ruin. Many's the time when a quick bit of accounting has shown that dining in can cost as much as dining out – and you still have to do the dishes and clean up afterwards.

Foodwriter Fiona Beckett has got plenty of ideas on how to be a generous host without resorting to beans on toast for the rest of the month.

Her new book, *The Frugal Cook*, is packed with recipes and ideas to turn simple ingredients into meals with the wow factor.

She says it is possible to skimp without it showing – you just need to be clever.

"Make up for your lack of cash by inviting friends to a meal that sounds fun," she says.

"You could tie it to an event... or focus on a type of food, like a cupcake tea, a jelly and ice-cream party, or a soup supper."

Here Fiona shares two recipes.

Caramelised Cauliflower Soup

Serves 4-6

1 medium to large cauliflower
75g unsalted butter
1/4 tsp curry powder plus a little extra for decoration



150ml semi-skimmed milk
600ml light vegetable stock

Salt, black pepper and lemon juice to taste
Chop the cauliflower. Cut the butter into cubes, put them in a large saucepan and place on a medium to high heat. Add the cauliflower and cook, stirring occasionally until golden brown (about 12-15 minutes).

Stir in the curry powder and cook for another two to three minutes then add the milk, and bring to the boil, stirring. Reduce the heat, cover the pan and simmer for five minutes.

Add 300ml of the stock, bring to the boil then cook gently until the cauliflower is soft. Remove the pan from the heat, leave to stand for five minutes then tip the contents into a liquidiser and puree until smooth. Return to the pan.

Whizz up the remaining stock in the blender to pick up the last bits of the puree and add to the cauliflower. Stir well and re-heat gently.

Season to taste with lemon juice, salt and black pepper. Serve in small bowls with chives and a light dusting of curry powder.

Empress of Puddings

Serves 4

400ml whole milk
finely grated rind of 1 small unwaxed lemon
15g butter
25g caster sugar
80g fresh breadcrumbs
2 large egg yolks
3tbsp raspberry jam
125g fresh or frozen raspberries or mixed small berries

For the meringue:

2 large egg whites
110g caster sugar

You will need a lightly greased small to medium-sized shallow oven-proof dish about 750ml in capacity.

Pour the milk in a saucepan, add the lemon rind and stir then place over a low heat until the milk is hot. Add the butter and caster sugar and leave a couple of minutes until melted then strain the milk over the breadcrumbs. Stir and leave for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile heat the oven to 160C/325F/Gas 3. Beat the soaked breadcrumbs, then beat in the egg yolks and tip the mixture into the greased pie dish. Place the dish in a roasting tin of water and bake for about 45 minutes until the top is lightly set.

Put the jam in a small saucepan with the frozen fruit, warm through and spread gently over the pudding without breaking the surface.

Whip the egg whites until stiff then whisk in half the sugar until the mixture is thick. Fold in the remaining sugar and spread over pudding.

Put the pudding back in the oven, turn the heat down to 150C/300F/Gas 2, and cook for 15-20 minutes until the meringue is golden brown.

To see this clip, search 'food'

@ yourkenttv.co.uk



We look at how much cheaper, healthier and popular it is becoming to grow our own food and cook at home.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ St Georges Chevrolet in Margate is offering free three years servicing extended AA roadside membership

■ Holiday Inn Express in Ramsgate is offering a room, bed and breakfast and entertainment package for £55 which includes movies, music and internet plus free parking

■ GG Racing in Ashford is offering free memorabilia – buy a share in a racehorse and receive a free mouse mat, coaster, key ring and fridge magnet worth over £10

■ KOS is offering luxury Egyptian cotton 400-count percale bed linen. Save up to 40 per cent off RRP

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Help available to keep the roof over your head

By STEVE KNIGHT

HOMEOWNERS and tenants have been assured that help is always at hand if they are struggling to make their monthly mortgage or rental payments.

According to the public services website Directgov, losing a home can usually be avoided if the person living there fully explores the numerous options available to them first.

For example, owners can often negotiate a new payment plan with their mortgage lender, while they and those renting properties should also find out if they are eligible for any housing benefits.

In both cases Directgov advises people to pay as much as they can manage each month, as regular payments at least demonstrate to lenders and landlords that they are committed to overcoming their problems.

For those homeowners who feel there really is no way out, the Government announced last week that it was rolling its mortgage rescue scheme out across the country.

The £200 million programme – which is being managed by the National Housing Federation (NHF) – allows people to take a loan from or sell their homes to housing asso-



DON'T PANIC: Assistance for homeowners

ciations, who will then lease the property back. Residents in Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Dartford, Tonbridge and Malling and Shepway were among the first to benefit when

the scheme was piloted in December.

NHF chief executive David Orr said: "The mortgage rescue scheme will save thousands of vulnerable families from the nightmare of having their homes repossessed and give them the long-term stability they need."

"This scheme will also serve to undermine those shadowy companies currently making money out of people's misfortune by buying their properties at substantially less than the going rate – and then only letting them stay on a short-term tenancy basis."

For those people who cannot pay their rent or are worried they may not be able to in the future, the message from Directgov is clear – sort things out as soon as you can.

Tenants are advised to prioritise the debts they need to pay off and, most importantly, to talk through their problems with their landlord.

Landlords usually have the right to evict for rent arrears depending on their tenancy agreement, so it is important they are always kept informed of their tenant's current situation.

A number of groups exist to provide help and advice to people such as struggling homeowners, including the Consumer Credit Counselling Service and Community Legal Advice.

Shelter also gives advice on all types of housing issues, as does the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Cox & Son furniture and soft furnishings store in Ramsgate is offering to upgrade your carpet underlay for free, have super for standard price, have deluxe for super price

■ Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off laminates

■ Avinco Limited in Ramsgate is offering a free consultation on digital TV

■ Bourne Road Garage in Crayford is offering a free tank of fuel with all Mazda purchases new and used

■ Clarkes Furnishers in Maidstone is offering £50 off the sale price when you buy any stressless chair and stool

■ Stonecroft Emporium in Broadstairs is offering free glowing bunny ears free when you buy a UV Tutu skirt

■ Lenleys in Canterbury is offering an extra £2 sq m off sale price of any carpet order over 15sq m, which includes underlay. Free fitting for standard rooms

■ Nasons in Canterbury is offering 10 per cent off beds and bedroom furniture

■ Old Sawmills in Ashford is offering 20 per cent off all showroom items

■ PK Commercial Tyres in Ashford and Maidstone is offering £10 off MOT's

■ KOS is offering Ultra slim Danish Skagen watches only £69.99 save £20 on the RRP

■ Thorley Tavern Oak Hotel in Ramsgate is offering 20 per cent off bar food menu

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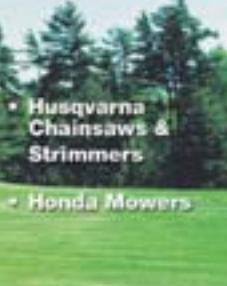
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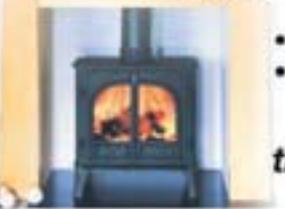
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Making a budget can control your money

By JENNA PUDELEK

CREATING an accurate personal budget will help to cut-out needless expenses and save money during these times of economic hardship.

Realistic records of funds coming in and out allow people need to know how much spare cash they have available when speaking to creditors, who can then advise on ways to pay back the money owed back over a period of time.

"Keep a record of everything you spend money on to complete an accurate picture of your monthly expenditure," is the advice issued by the Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS).

The Financial Services Authority (FSA), the national financial watchdog, provides an online budget calculator and the Government has also provided a step-by-step guide to make the process as painless as possible at its Directgov website.

The first step for creating a personal budget is to calculate 'outgoings' by digging out recent bank statements, energy bills, telephone bills, council tax, water rates, insurance and other similar expenses.

Also include anything paid for by standing orders such as mortgage or rent payments.

Estimate the amount spent on everyday items such as food, clothes, petrol, pet food and

newspapers as well as cash forked out for other 'events' like Christmas, birthday presents, going to the dentist and holidays.

Calculate total outgoings for a full year and then divide by 52 or 12 to get a weekly or monthly figure.

Income is worked out through checking payslips to get an accurate figure for wages, plus any benefits such as child tax credit and any rent from lodgers or adult children.

To see this clip, search 'travel'

@ yourkenttv.co.uk



One of the biggest family costs is the holiday. We look at how to save money and enjoy what's on your doorstep

Add up the total income for a week or a month and then take away the expenditure.

If there is a 'shortfall' or more money is being spent than is coming in, the Government advises people to "prioritise spending and cut back on commitments you can't afford".

Money can be saved by 'shopping around' to find the best deal on gas, electric and telephone bills, surviving on the bare essentials and dealing with debts immediately.

People have also been advised to find out if they are owed any additional benefits or tax credits and to ensure that everyone in the household who is working is paying their share.

A budget is only an estimate of income and it is important to keep track of money coming in and expenses to keep your plan up-to-date and accurate.

The Government's money experts advise keeping a notebook to hand and writing down everything spent over the course of a couple of months.

Budgets need reviewed regularly in case a new job comes along or there are other changes in circumstance.

Spare money can be kept in savings accounts and the FSA can provide good personal financial advice, the Government added.

For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk, www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk, www.cccs.co.uk or call the CCCS' hotline on 0800 138 1111.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ County Bed Company in Strood and Tonbridge is offering 10 per cent off any mattress when purchased with a bedstead

■ Lenleys in Canterbury is offering an extra 10 per cent off sale prices of rugs, pictures, mirrors and lighting

■ Nasons in Wincheap, Canterbury is offering 10 per cent off carpets

■ Oliver Carpets in Ramsgate/Herne Bay is offering 15 per cent off when you spend over £600

■ Pompheys Motors in Bapchild and Sittingbourne is offering car rental – book one day and get the second free

■ Robins and Day Motors in Canterbury is offering a free winter health check on production of this voucher (normal RRP £19.99)

■ Atlantis Restaurant in Ramsgate is offering 25 per cent off food from the à la carte menu

■ Theatre Royal in Margate is offering Gussie, March 7, 7.30 two tickets for one top price ticket (£12 each)

■ Ideal Home Improvements in Sheerness is offering 10 per cent off advertised rates

■ Kitchen to Table in Rochester is offering £10 off goods with an order value £50

■ KOS – Save £200 on the Toyota CB04T Mark II sewing machine only £99.99 inc p&p

■ Thorley Tavern in Broadstairs is offering a free glass of wine with The Table d hôte Menu Mon to Fri

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HANG UP: Save money on your mobile phone

BY STEVE KNIGHT

MOBILE telephones have become an essential part of everyday life over the past decade, albeit a pricey part at that.

Whether on contract or pay-as-you-go, most of us now pay more money to speak to friends and family than at any time in the past.

The average mobile phone bill is £205.20 a year, but industry experts claim that figure could be much lower if users took the time to research the different tariffs available.

Consumer finance journalist Martin Lewis, who in 2003 founded MoneySavingExpert.com, said: "Anyone on a contract mobile phone is holding a serious money-saving weapon, and that's loyalty."

"When nearing the end of the contract, ask for the very best deal possible – not just on your network, but any out there."

"If the person at the other end won't budge, tell them 'give me a better package or I'll leave' and you'll be put through to the disconnections department, which internally is called 'customer retentions' and has massively more discretion to offer better packages to keep you."

"If they don't give you what you want then

you need to shift networks to a better deal."

There are many other ways to save money on mobile telephones, such as considering whether it is really worth insuring your handset given that you could probably afford to buy a new one when you add up all the monthly charges.

People looking to save money should also cut down on the obvious unnecessary expenses associated with downloading music tracks, ringtones and wallpapers that can sometimes cost up to £3.50 a time.

There are also ways in which you can make money from your mobile telephone, such as recycling one that you no longer use.

The Carphone Warehouse gives up to £20 off a new handset if you trade in your old one.

Persuading a friend to sign up to the same network as you can also earn you a tidy sum. 3Mobile, for instance, gives £30 to both parties if you recommend a friend and they sign a contract.

That figure rises to £45 each if you sign up for mobile broadband.

But perhaps the simplest piece of advice is to consider what it is you really need from your telephone.

If you can live without a satellite navigation system, a powerful camera and other non-call or text-related add-ons, chances are your handset will cost you a lot less.

To see this clip, search 'business'
@ yourkenttv.co.uk



We look at the pros and cons of setting up a small business in 2009 and ask if now is the right time to go it alone

Essential guide to where you can save

■ County Bed Company in Strood and Tonbridge is offering a free memory foam pillow with any memory foam divan or mattress

■ Lindsays's Driver Training in Hythe is offering for you to train to be a driving instructor with £50 off a part 1 study pack

■ Nasons in Canterbury is offering 10 per cent off tiles

■ Pompheys in Sittingbourne is offering half price MOT with every service

■ The Pavilion in Broadstairs is offering a buy two get one free breakfast from 9.30-11.30am, on Saturday and Sunday

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Crunch can make your will out of date

THE CREDIT crisis has made thousands of wills across Kent out of date and in need of rewriting, experts have warned.

The Law Society, which represents solicitors in England and Wales, said the economic slowdown that has seen home values plummeting and other investment struggling meant that many assets in a person's will had lost their value.

Paul Marsh, president of the society, said: "Those wanting to leave friends and family in a secure position after they pass away might find that what they have left in their will has considerably less value than when their solicitor wrote it."

Tax planning

"With homes losing value, people may need to look again at their wills – especially if they have included tax planning provisions which are no longer appropriate."

"The same goes for shares and other assets. The value of the assets in a person's will might have fallen significantly since it was drafted and so the will may need to be rewritten."

The Government charges inheritance tax on assets left in wills, which is affected by how much is left and to whom.

Mr Marsh said: "It is essential that anyone with a will who has not looked to update it recently goes to their solicitor to review it and, if needs be, change it to reflect their current financial situation."

"A solicitor is best placed to advise on any necessary amendments, as well as provide guidance on tax planning."

"Reducing the tax burden on the assets you wish to leave in your will has an even more relevant benefit for your family and friends in the current economic climate."

"If you do not have a will, now would be a good time to write one or risk leaving friends, families or other intended recipients of your assets with nothing."

If you are feeling the pinch due to the economic downturn, Citizens Advice Bureaus can offer advice on creating and maintaining wills.

Money left to husbands, wives or civil partners count as an 'exempt beneficiary' and there usually won't be any inheritance tax to pay.

Up to £312,000 can be left to anyone tax free and anything above that is taxable at 40 per cent.

Inheritance tax does not have to be paid on assets or money left to a registered UK charity.

The Law Society urged everyone to ensure their wills were up to date.

And the Solicitors Journal reported last week that the effects of the economic downturn were already being felt at HM Revenue and Customs in Nottingham after the revenue reported receiving a lot of claims for loss on sale of shares.

For more information and advice on writing wills go to www.direct.gov.uk or www.lawsociety.org.uk.

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Triple-whammy drives motorists to think meaner, leaner and greener

IT NORMALLY takes five to seven years to bring a new car to the market, so hard-pressed carmakers deserve credit for so much choice in a market made suddenly harder.

They and their buyers faced a triple-whammy last year: the recognition of global warming, a need to be seen to be greener and now a belt-tightening recession of global proportions.

The Government has also attempted to drive people into smaller and cleaner cars through new road tax bandings ranging from zero to £400/year and set to become tougher.

By 2010, gas guzzling limos or 4x4s face £950 road tax in the first year, although anyone spending £50,000-100,000 on a car is unlikely to be put off by such a paltry sum.

For those who want to reduce their motoring costs and emissions footprint though, 2009 opened with plenty of options.

The headline grabber is Toyota's all-new IQ baby car. Seating three adults and a child within a bodyshell barely longer than a two-seat Smart city car is no mean feat by the

By STEVE LOADER

world's No1 carmaker. It entailed clever downsizing of traditional components and yet the IQ has looks and equipment to become a cult car.

Talking of which, Fiat has not done so badly with its retro-styled 500 city car – in its junior form it offers affordable road presence as well as great economy.

Most carmakers are also falling over themselves to come up with 'eco-branding' for the most miserly and low-emission versions of top sellers; German car marques have a strange



TOYOTA IQ: Proper car in small package



ULTRA GREEN:
Ford's Fiesta is out
now – the ECOnetic

urge to describe their greenest offerings as 'blue' hence the BlueMotion series from VW and rather less snappily labelled BlueEfficiency models from Mercedes-Benz.

In their usual bid to be different from each other, Vauxhall and Ford have each come up with something similar: the greenest Vauxhalls are ecoFLEX, while Ford counterparts are ECOlogic.

The duo's newest standard bearers are the Vauxhall Insignia ecoFLEX family/company car sector model and Ford's impressive road tax-exempt Fiesta ECOlogic.

Such 'eco-specials' can achieve improved fuel consumption, emissions and road tax bills with a mix of enhanced aerodynamics, revised engine management and gearbox ratios and lower rolling resistance tyres.

However, they don't come cheap, so weigh potential long-term savings against the greater upfront cost – if you don't cover the miles, then conventional alternatives may be a better bet.

Don't ignore petrol models either; the higher price of diesel cars and the fuel at the pumps need to be compared with new and more powerful small petrol models available such as VW's new turbocharged 1.4-litre variants.

On the wider issue of alternative fuels see our Fuel For Thought feature later in this section.



VAUXHALL: Has adopted ecoFlex branding for the greenest versions of its model line-up

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Lindsay's Driver Training in Hythe is offering ADi Training course – £30 off two hour session

■ Lordswood Leisure Centre in Chatham is offering free function hire

■ Pompheys Motors in Bapchild and Sittingbourne is offering half-price MOT with every service

■ Simply Sofas & Beds in Strood is offering 10 per cent off beds and divans

■ Living Out, Log Cabins in Maidstone offers free installation on all standard range of cabins

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering a free man and a van for clients renting storage for longer than three months

■ Baileys Nissan in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off MOTs

■ Dee's Bistro in Sandwich is offering 25 per cent off your bill on Wednesday and Thursday evenings includes drinks and "WOW" during January, February and March 2009. Meal is from the regular menu

■ Home Plus in Ashford/Chatham is offering free bedding set with any bed or mattress

■ FG Barnes in Maidstone is offering free Diamondbrite paint and trim protection with all used cars

■ KOS is offering goose down surround pillows from only £24.99 inc p&p. Save up to £125 on RRP

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Smart driving saves money

SWAPPING your car for something more economical, road-tax friendly and cheaper to insure is an obvious way to tighten your motoring belt, but we can all save money with smarter driving.

Try to avoid short journeys for a start; a cold engine can produce 60 per cent more pollution than a warm one and a car that leads a life of short journeys needs more servicing and the engine will wear more quickly.

Traffic on our roads contributes 26 per cent of the UK's total carbon dioxide emissions (CO2) but, having decided your journey must be by car, check these tips from the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) and RAC Foundation motoring watchdogs:

- Plan your route – forethought can save wear and tear on the car and the driver. Try to take the most direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off peak if possible. If you have to commute by car, think about car sharing, 'Park and Ride' schemes or public transport.

- Have your vehicle serviced regularly to maintain efficiency and economy. Underserviced engines can reduce fuel economy by 10 per cent or more. Catalytic converters are environmentally friendly, but only when properly maintained.

- Check tyres – under-inflated tyres need replacing more often (itself an environmental problem), are dangerous and waste fuel. Anybody who has cycled on 'flabby' tyres knows what extra effort is involved, so check pressures weekly.

- Obey speed limits to save money and keep you on the right side of the law. Try to 'feather' the throttle as you reach cruising speed; 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style can bring significant fuel saving.

However, never coast in neutral or with clutch pedal depressed to save fuel; vehicle control must not be compromised.



ECONOMY: Review your driving techniques to save money all round (top) and (below) keep on top of tyre pressures to save fuel and wear and tear



By STEVE LOADER

- Accelerate briskly without racing the engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Use the gearbox efficiently as changing gear at modest engine speeds can cut fuel consumption by up to 15 per cent.

- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use. Driving with windows open also mars aerodynamics and lowers fuel economy. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and avoid heavy accessories and wide tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning lowers fuel economy so use the fan and vents unassisted as much as possible.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Find out if you can buy low sulphur diesel (City diesel) or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics) locally. Consider a conversion to LPG (liquid petroleum gas), which is half the price of petrol, generates almost as much power and emits much less CO2.

- Use 'accelerator sense'. Do you go straight from accelerator to the brake? You save fuel if you plan ahead and, rather than have to brake as you hit traffic, gently let the speed of the vehicle bring you to a halt as you join a queue. There is no point in rushing and then having to brake suddenly.

- Reverse in when you park. When you start off again, the engine is cold and inefficient. If you can drive away smoothly without having to reverse, you save fuel and have better visibility.

- Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank to the brim and carry more weight than is necessary?

- If you are stuck in a jam then you are doing zero mpg – turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions.

For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at www.yourkenttv.co.uk/community.

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By STEVE LOADER

Fuel for thought

MORE than ever, UK drivers are asked to think about what is cheapest and best to run their car on.

Diesel has become first choice, accounting for more than half of all new car sales, but can it continue?

Part of diesel's appeal was cheapness, greater mpg and the ability of the engines to deliver low-down pulling power and meet tighter emissions legislation.

However, the fuel now commands an increasing premium against petrol and there are questions about whether the fuel can continue to meet ever-tighter emission laws.

In addition, petrol has fought back with smaller, lighter and cleaner engines with turbocharging and even supercharging for extra flexibility, but there are other power source candidates emerging to save money and the planet:

Hybrid

Toyota is readying the third generation of its ground-breaking Prius hybrid and Honda plans the launch of a new Insight family hatchback priced to attack the likes of the Ford Focus. Both hybrids use petrol engines in tandem with electric units.

But two powerplants and power supplies – fuel tank plus batteries – mean more weight, while complexity of production questions profitability. If you're considering a hybrid you need to be covering many miles to justify extra upfront cost and bear in mind motorway mpg is hardly better than a standard car.

LPG

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) looks like an excellent alternative fuel due to lower fuel duty and emissions, cheaper car tax and grants towards the higher cost of buying new or converting older vehicles to run on LPG.

There is also a plentiful UK LPG supply as a spin-off from natural gas and refinery production of other fuels.

There are many more LPG filling points across the country too – Kent now has some 40 LPG sites – and Proton recently launched a petrol and LPG version of its GEN-2 family hatchback for the same price as the petrol-only model (£10,765).

LPG costs about half that of petrol and diesel at the pump, emits about 20 per cent less CO2 than petrol and slightly less than diesel and fewer nitrogen oxides and particulates than diesel. However, the calorific value and mpg is slightly lower than for petrol and it will cost at least £1,500 to convert an existing vehicle via an approved LPG Association operator.

Electric

Electric-powered vehicles should be cheap to run, but battery technology is not yet advanced enough to guarantee ranges to satisfy would-be owners. There is the obvious worry too that the car's emissions are being transferred from the exhaust pipe to the chimney of a power station burning fossil fuel.



Peugeot's smooth diesel models have done much to persuade UK drivers to switch from petrol and this Peugeot 308 HYbrid 2 concept shows how the French marque is also looking at a diesel-electric combination for the future

Biofuels

Biofuels derived partly from vegetable matter appeal since plants absorb CO2 during growth and simply release it again when burned – a virtuous circle. Fuels derived with an element of plant matter divide broadly into biodiesel and the petrol alternative bioethanol, and most road fuels sold in the UK will contain at least five per cent biofuel by next year, anyway. Some specialist vehicles are available that can run on higher 'bio' concentrations, but there is concern that turning over arable land or forest to grow 'biofuel' plants will strain the world's food supplies.

Hydrogen

Use of this abundant gas to power electrical-driven cars – Honda already has an extensive trial running in California – looks like the future. Hydrogen cars are zero emission, but it is proving hard to establish the cost and possible emissions side-effects of producing the hydrogen fuel.

Essential guide to where you can save

- Spand Motors in Hythe is offering 10 per cent off MOTs when pre-booked
- Simply Sofas & Beds in Strood is offering 10 per cent off sofas
- Dartford Portable buildings in Dartford is offering up to 15 per cent off timber buildings. Finance options available on Crompton garages
- Living Out, Log Cabins in Chestfield and Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off
- County Garage in Herne Bay is offering a free protection pack worth up to £400. Free full tank of fuel, free Gard X Paint and interior or protection, free front and rear mats
- Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering free used boxes for all storage customers
- Home Plus Furniture in Ashford/Chatham is offering £75 off when you spend over £500
- FG Barnes in Maidstone is offering a free MOT for period of ownership when done with a service
- Orchard Spot in Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off a wedding package. Must be booked on February 15 at wedding fayre
- KOS is offering Five Global knives set, scissors and block, £199.99, save £150 off RRP
- Kentish Hardwood in Rainham is offering 10 per cent off selected hardwoods
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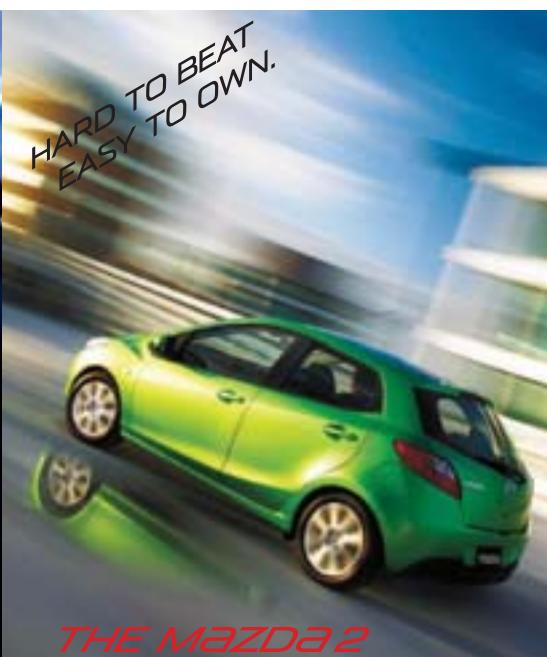
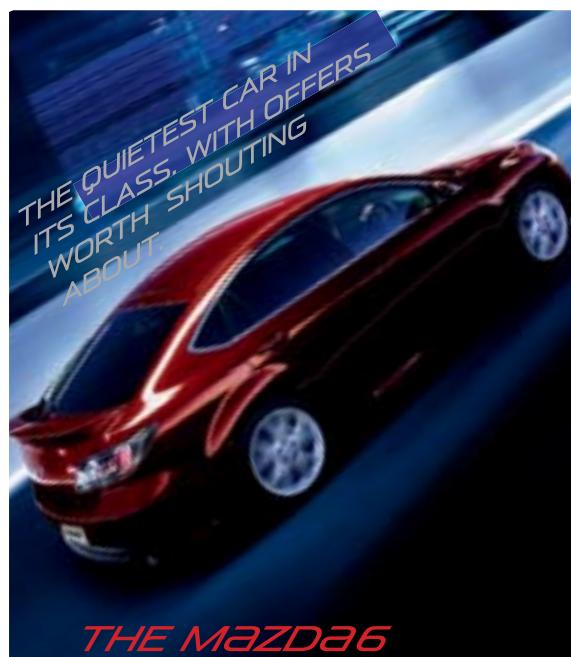
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PROPERTY NEWS

Don't bank on a year of decline

UNCERTAINTY could yet deliver good news to the housing market and not just doom and gloom, one of the UK's top money experts has said.

While the general mood is the housing market will continue to decline over the coming months, chief economist of Britain's largest building society, Nationwide, says we should assume nothing just yet, but wait to see how the economy unfolds.

Fionnuala Earley, has suggested how, despite the recession seen in the final quarter of 2008, the economy may benefit from the built-up demand of first-time buyers who will invest when the markets begin to recover.

She said: "In these turbulent times the uncertainties around all forecasts are greater than usual.

"If the economy goes into a deeper recession we should expect to see a slower recovery in the cycle.

"However, if the economy recovers more swiftly, we may expect a faster turnaround in the housing market.

"Three main factors have been behind the sharp fall in prices: credit conditions, expectations and affordability."

"Conditions remain volatile going into 2009 making it more difficult than usual to arrive at a specific forecast for house prices. In these unsettled times a forecast subject to frequent change could itself add to greater uncertainty."

Policy plans for Brits living abroad

HOLIDAY home insurance specialist Intasure has introduced a new policy for people who have their main homes in Britain but are abroad for much of the year.

The company, which provides policy documents in English and operates a UK-based English-speaking support team, also provides cover for holiday homes across European countries and further afield, such as Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.

The firm says its policies are designed around the needs of property owners and can include locally tailored cover.

The new policy for UK-domiciled holiday home owners is being promoted by insurance company JML, which points out that increasing numbers of British second home owners are retired and can therefore spend long periods away from their main residences.



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Trading up offers silver lining in cloudy market

■ BY NICK AMES

THE fall in house prices has brought some good news for people looking to climb up the property ladder.

And it comes as a result of tumbling house prices reducing the gap between one and two-bedroom homes.

One-bedroom houses have fallen in value by eight per cent in a year, while two-bedroom houses have seen nearly 12 per cent slashed from their value.

The difference in price between a one and two-bedroom home is now £31,000 on average – that's the lowest in five years. Just 12 months ago it was £41,000.

Now estate agents are hoping more people will choose now to sell their home to first-time buyers and move up, helping free the market and benefit sellers across all price ranges.

With interest rates at their lowest level ever, that additional £30,000 on the mortgage could cost as little as £120 a month extra.

One analyst said for many people it means affordability they may not have realised amid all the economic gloom.

The value of two-bedroom homes had fallen the most, losing 11.92 per cent during 2008, compared with a drop of eight per cent for one-bedroom homes.

Three-bedroom house prices have fallen too, by an average of 11.89 per cent. But it is still cheaper than a year ago to trade up from two to three bedrooms. It costs £58,436 on average – 12 months ago it was £66,264.

Better home

One estate agent said: "These are tough times and house prices have fallen. But if people can afford to sell their house for less, they will be able to buy a better home for less as well."

But when you get into four-bedroom territory it is now more expensive to bridge the average price gap between a three and four-bedroom house.

The average cost of a four-bedroom home has fallen from £390,343 to £370,276 during the last year, but because the price of three-bedroom homes has fallen faster, the cost of trading up has increased from £141,733 in 2007 to £151,235.

Nicholas Leeming, director of propertyfinder.com, said: "The real catalyst for house price falls has been a lack of mortgage availability, particularly for less credit-worthy borrowers.

"This means the bottom end of the market has been more impacted by the slowdown and prices there have fallen more rapidly.

"People higher up the ladder will naturally find it easier to gain access to finance in order to move, but because of this the price of four-bed properties has only fallen five per cent compared with around 12 per cent for two and three beds, so the financial gap has actually widened."



SIGN OF THE TIMES: But house price falls and low interest rates have brought larger homes within reach

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**PUBLIC NOTICE****MAIDSTONE, £132,500**

PROPERTY ADDRESS : 8 HIGHLAND ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 7QH We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £127,500 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**PUBLIC NOTICE****MAIDSTONE £104,950**

PROPERTY ADDRESS : 110 KINGSLEY ROAD MAIDSTONE KENT ME15 7UP We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £90,000 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £249,950**

An individual and substantial three bedroom family home set back off of Lower Fant. There are three bedrooms and a split level lounge/dining room separated by a feature brick fireplace.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**ALLINGTON £280,000**

A four bedroom detached home with ensuite located in a cul-de-sac location. This property benefits from a re-fitted kitchen and a utility room. There is a double glazed conservatory.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £110,000**

A modern ground floor two bedroom apartment with gas central heating and double glazing. There is a 15' living room which is open plan to a fitted kitchen which includes fitted appliances.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**EAST FARLEIGH OIEO £200,000**

An extended semi-detached home in a pleasant semi-rural location with orchards to the front. There are three reception rooms, double glazed conservatory and a re-fitted 16' shaker style kitchen.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**PUBLIC NOTICE****MAIDSTONE £137,950**

PROPERTY ADDRESS : 6 OLD SCHOOL PLACE, MAIDSTONE ME14 1EQ We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £132,000 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £145,000**

An end of terraced house with three bedrooms all with fitted wardrobes. There is double glazing, gas central heating and double glazing. There are two reception areas, off road parking to the rear.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £165,000**

A modernised and re-furbished three bedroom home with modern fitted kitchen and bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing. There are two reception areas, off road parking to the rear.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE OIEO £159,995**

A super three bedroom family home with gas central heating and double glazing. Other benefits include a double glazed conservatory. There is no stamp duty payable on this property.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £199,500**

A three bedroom semi detached home with a garden. This property has double glazing, gas central heating, two reception rooms and a utility area across the back of the dining room.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**SUTTON VALENCE OIEO £169,950**

A three bedroom home with a rear garden in excess of 150' backing onto farmland. Other benefits include gas central heating, double glazing and off road parking for two cars at the front.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**PENENDEN HEATH OIEO £375,000**

A super four bedroom detached home with ensuite bathroom, three reception rooms and a kitchen/breakfast room. Other benefits include a cloakroom, gas central heating, double glazing, double garage

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £455,000**

An impressive detached Victorian home sympathetically improved by its current owners. The property benefits from many original features and are complimented by a contemporary kitchen and a bathroom.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**LARKFIELD £395,000**

A vastly improved and spacious detached family home. This home has a contemporary feel and we feel sure that this will be appreciated by all who view.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE, OIEO £150,000**

An older style three bedroom home with spacious accommodation. There are two separate reception rooms and ground floor WC. The property also benefits from gas central heating, double glazing.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE OIEO £112,500**

A two bedroom terraced home situated within close proximity to Maidstone town centre. The property benefits from an open plan lounge dining room, cellar and an upstairs shower room.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £119,950**

A unique two bedroom Grade II Listed terraced home in Maidstone. The accommodation is arranged over three floors and has a modern kitchen and bathroom but does require some work.

Maidstone Office 01622 759891

**MAIDSTONE £195,000**

A three bedroom semi detached home with a 16' conservatory. Other saleable features include gas central heating, double glazing and cavity wall insulation. An internal viewing is recommended.

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Kent ME14 1JH

Grove Green Office
Tel: 01622 735513
2 The Minor Centre, Grove Green,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 5TQ



Detling £399,995

4/5 bedroom detached, 200ft rear garden with kennel block, block paved drive for several cars, semi rural location.

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Weavering £390,000

4 bedroom detached, conservatory, en-suite shower, utility room and study

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Weavering £325,000

Four bedroom detached, private walled garden, tandem garage, conservatory, excellent condition throughout

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Detling £325,000

4 bedroom detached bungalow, fantastic bathroom and separate shower room, office and workshop, conservatory

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Allington £310,000

Well appointed detached 4 bed family home, lounge, fitted kitchen, en-suite. Central heating, double glazing, garage and driveway.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Bearsted £250,000

Three bedroom semi-detached, generous sized garden, garage, no chain

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



West Malling £264,950

3 bedrooms, two en-suites, fitted kitchen/dining room, sought after area. no onward chain

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Bearsted £250,000

3 bedroom semi-detached situated in Bearsted. UPVC double glazing, conservatory, central heating and garage.

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Weavering £249,950

3 bedroom semi-detached, refitted kitchen and bathroom, double glazing, gas central heating

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Maidstone £239,995

2 bed detached bungalow close to local amenities with double glazing, central heating, garage & planning consent for extension.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Weavering £219,995

Three bedroom extended property, integral garage, two reception rooms, no chain

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Maidstone £215,000

3 bedroom semi-detached, 2 reception rooms, double glazing, gas fired central heating, garage and driveway

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Maidstone £199,995

3 bedroom semi-detached, UPVC double glazing, good size plot, off road parking

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Maidstone £195,000

Modern 3 bedroom end of terrace house, en-suite, kitchen/dining room, garage, drive and no onward chain.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Maidstone £194,995

Three bedroom semi-detached, double glazing, garage and driveway, no chain

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Tonbridge £185,000

Unique single storey semi-detached cottage lounge with wood burner, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, extensive garden.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Bearsted £154,995

Sought after well presented two bedroom terrace, gas fired central heating, double glazing, garage, no chain

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Weavering £154,950

2 bedroom end of terrace, double glazing, gas fired central heating, allocated parking, front and rear gardens

CALL OUR GROVE GREEN OFFICE 01622 735513



Maidstone £149,995

3 bedroom end of terrace house, kitchen/dining room, double glazing, central heating, driveway and enclosed rear garden.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Maidstone £149,995

2 double bedroom terrace house with en-suite dressing room, lounge, kitchen/breakfast, enclosed rear garden, no chain.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



West Malling £139,950

3 bedroom terrace house with 2 receptions and conservatory, double glazing, central heating, garage en-bloc and no chain.

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Maidstone £114,995

One bedroom flat benefiting from UPVC double glazing, modern kitchen and bathroom, together with communal parking and garden.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Maidstone £102,500

2 bed terrace house close to town centre with central heating, double glazing & patio garden.

CALL OUR MAIDSTONE OFFICE 01622 757213



Maidstone £79,950

One bedroom ground floor flat with lounge, kitchen & bathroom. Double glazing, central heating, allocated parking and no chain.

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Maidstone £65,000

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Bairstow eves

Maidstone 01622 691554

maidstone@bairstoweves.co.uk



£119,950

Unique four bedroom house in town centre, no onward chain and viewing via agent. Viewing recommended.



£144,950

Two bedrooms plus an open plan living area, bathroom and en-suite shower room, balcony and hallway. A viewing is recommended.



£199,995

Very popular cul de sac in Maidstone the property boasts two receptions, hallway, cloakroom, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, ensuite and bathroom.



£199,995

Viewing is highly recommended on this improved family house in the ever popular Allington area. It is in a cul de sac location and is close to local shops.



£219,995

Family accommodation in cul de sac position in Penenden Heath. En suite, cloakroom and family bathroom, ideal for M20 and town centre.



£219,995

Cox style 3 bedroom semi detached family home is offered for sale. Lounge and dining room, kitchen and bathroom.



£249,995

3 bedroom bungalow with garage and driveway, corner plot, separate lounge/dining room, kitchen & shower room. Viewing recommended.



OFFERS IN REGION OF £250,000

Deceptively spacious family home, extended to offer extra reception space, open plan lounge and family room. Call for your viewing today.



£274,995

This house offers family size accommodation. It is detached with garage and driveway, separate lounge and dining room plus 3rd reception room and bathroom with additional wc.



£275,000

Detached bungalow with no onward chain attached, a viewing is highly recommended as stamp duty is negotiable.

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MOTORS NEWS



French coupé chic

RENAULT dealers have the French marque's new halo model in stock – the sleek and sporty Laguna Coupé.

Gary Obee of Motorline Ashford said: "For what is such a strikingly beautiful and well equipped car, the price tag (from £20,995) is incredibly low and it comes with a host of equipment as standard."

The newcomer offers two versions of Renault's acclaimed 2.0 dCi diesel engine and two petrol engines (2.0 and 3.5 V6) all with six-speed transmission – a 3.0 V6 dCi is also promised soon.



Extra zero appeal

SUZUKI has extended its recession-busting zero per cent finance offer until March 31 and this includes the Swift supermini and new ultra-economical 1.0-litre version of the Splash mini-MPV.

The Japanese brand has also added a cool new option to the lively 1.6-litre Swift Sport – cool white pearl metallic paint – from £11,750.

In addition, there is a new website to stoke consumer interest in the latest Alto budget model due on March 1, with CO2 emissions of only 103 g/km and potential 62 mpg.



Strangled at birth?

PETROLHEAD rumour-mongers will have fun with this gorgeous VW roadster concept unveiled at the Auto Show in Detroit.

The German car giant insists that "Concept BlueSport is a design study with no immediate plans for production", but one wonders whether this decision was made before or after Porsche's recent takeover of the VW Group and its understandable concern about potential damage to Porsche Boxster sales.

The supercar brand already has a 'cuckoo' in the VW corporate nest – Audi's Porsche 911 rival, the R8.



CLASSY: The Fabia's Sport trim adds a few thousand to the price of your car, but it's money well spent when you consider savings in relation to other such cars

Sport's style pep's up Fabia

ROAD TEST SKODA FABIA

■ BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

standard Fabia's robust materials, ample stowage and – this time around – much 'sunnier' cabin.

It is all a far cry from the Soviet Bloc Skoda plastic-covered card trim of a few decades ago.

A decent size boot with thoughtful detachable stowage bin and two-position parcel shelf, also exhibits modern Skoda's usual thoughtful design.

There is no special chassis tuning to go with the Sport label – this is, no doubt, reserved for the vRS successor – but the basic Fabia set-up is suited to both staid and spirited driving.

Skoda has managed to pitch the ride quality well for the supermini class, yet the car grips and corners with great style.

I had mixed feelings about the flagship 105bhp 1.9TDI engine in our £13,155 test car though.

It is powerful and frugal – capable of averaging nearly 60mpg – but feels heavy and raucous except during motorway cruising, when its economy is best enjoyed.

Consequently, I think many customers should check out the cheaper 1.2 and 1.6-litre petrol and 1.4 diesel Fabia Sport alternatives.



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08 08 HONDA CIVIC 1-4 SE AUTO 5 DR PAS AIR SILVER 2000 MILES	£11995
08 08 HONDA JAZZ 1-4 SE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS MINT 1600 MILES	£10995
08 08 NEW ZAFIRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C TURQUOISE 4000 MILES	£10995
08 08 SKODA ROOMSTER 2 AUTO PAS AIR/C MET GREY 450 MILES	£9995
08 08 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 2000 MILES	£6495
08 08 HYUNDAI GETZ 1-4 CDX AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 3000 MILES	£7995
08 08 ASTRA 1-8 DESIGN AUTO PAS HATCH ULTRA BLUE 5000 MILES	£9995
08 08 VW POLO 1-4 MATCH 6 SPEED AUTO 5DR AIR BLACK 1000 MILES	£10995
08 08 VW POLO 1-4 MATCH 6 SPEED AUTO 5DR AIR BLACK 3000 MILES	£10995
08 08 MATRIX 1-6 GSI PAS AIR/C AUTO SHIMMER BLUE1500 MILES	£8995
08 08 NISSAN NOTE 1-6 ACENTA AUTO PAS AIR/C CHAMPAGNE 200 MILES	£10995
08 08 MICRA ACCENTA PLUS 5 DOOR AUTO BLACK PAS AIR/C 1900 MILES	£8995
08 08 ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DOOR BLACK 4000 MILES	£7995
08 08 CORSA 1-2 CLUB 3DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS ICE BLUE 3000 MILES	£8995
08 08 SUZUKI SWIFT 1-5 GLX 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS ORANGE 3000 MILES	£8995
08 08 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1-6 AUTO PAS CONVERTIBLE BLACK 3000MILES	£11995
08 08 NEW MODEL MERIVA 1-6 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 3000 MILES	£8995
08 08 PEUGEOT 207 SPORT 1-6 AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C BLACK 2000 MILES	£9995
08 08 PEUGEOT 207 SPORT 1-6 AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C BLACK 5000 MILES	£9995
08 08 DAIHATSU SIRION 1-3 SE AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 5000 MILES	£7995
08 57 TOYOTA AURIS TR 5DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS SILVER 5000 MILES	£10995
08 57 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/S OCEAN BLUE 3000 MILES	£9995
08 57 PEUGEOT 107 URBAN AUTO PAS 3DR YELLOW 10000 MILES	£6495
08 57 RENAULT MEGANE 1-6 EXPRESSION 4DR AUTO GREY 9000 MILES	£7495
08 57 NISSAN MICRA 1-6 CONVERTIBLE CC ACENTA AUTO PAS GREY 1000 MILES	£10995
08 57 MERCEDES C180 KOMP AVANTGARDE SE CUBANITE 13000 MILES	£17995
08 57 HONDA CR-V ES AUTO PAS SAT NAV PS LEATHER 5000 MILES	£19995
08 57 RENAULT MODUS INITIALE 1-6 AUTO PAS LEATHER 9000 MILES	£9995
08 57 VECTRA LIFE DIESEL AUTO 150BHP 5 DR PAS AIR/C 2000 MILES	£10995
08 57 NISSAN NOTE TEKNA 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR BLUE 7000 MILES	£9995
08 57 FIESTA 1-6 STYLE CLIMATE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C 6000 MILES	£8995
08 57 CORSA 1-4 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C STAR SILVER 7000 MILES	£8995
08 57 CITROEN C4 1-6 SX AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 3000 MILES	£8995
08 57 NEW MODEL MERIVA 1-6 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 2000 MILES	£8995
08 57 NEW ZAFIRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C TURQUOISE 1000 MILES	£8995
08 57 FOCUS 1-6 STYLE CLIMATE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/S 6000 MILES	£8995
08 57 NEW ZAFIRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C STAR SILVER 3000 MILES	£8995
08 57 NEW ASTRA 16 DESIGN AUTO PAS AIR/C ALLOYS SILVER 5000 MILES	£9995

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07 07 FIESTA 1-6 STYLE CLIMATE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C 5000 MILES	£8495
07 07 FUSION 1-6 PLUS CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C AMYTHYST 4000 MILES	£8995
07 07 FUSION 1-6 PLUS CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C TANGO RED 14000 MILES	£8995
06 56 FIESTA ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR BLUE 14000 MILES	£6995
05 55 FIESTA 1-6 GHIA 5 DR AUTO PAS TONIC BLUE LEATHER 4000 MILES	£7995
05 05 FUSION 2' 1-6 AUTO PAS 5 DR PANTHER BLACK 20000 MILES	£6495
05 54 FUSION 3' 1-6 AUTO PAS 5 DR GREY ALLOYS AIR/C 14000 MILES	£5995
03 53 FUSION 2 1-4 AUTO PAS AIR/C BRONZE METALLIC 38000 MILES	£4695

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06 56 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/S OCEAN BLUE 8000 MILES	£8995
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06 06 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C 14000 MILES	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO PAS AIR/C 14000 MILES	£8995
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 LX 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C TONIC BLUE 12000 MILES	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 14000 MILES	£7995
06 55 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA 5DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS BLUE 4000 MILES	£8995
05 55 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA 5DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS BLUE 17000 MILES	£7995
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05 55 FOCUS 1-6 LX 5 DR AUTO PAS PANTHER BLACK 7000MILES	£6995
05 55 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS TONIC BLUE 14000 MILES	£7495
05 55 FOCUS 1-6 LX 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C JEANS BLUE 15000 MILES	£7495
05 55 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C ALLOYS BLUE 13000MLS	£7495
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05 05 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 3DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS ROSSO 12000 MILES	£5995
04 54 FOCUS 1-6 LX 5 DR AUTO PAS DEEP ROSSO RED 8000 MILES	£5995
04 54 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 5DR AUTO PAS ALLOYS ROSSO RED 15000 MILES	£5995
04 54 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 5DR AUTO PAS ALLOYS SILVER 5000 MILES	£5995
04 04 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO SALOON AIR/C ALLOYS SILVER 28000 MILES	£7495
04 04 FOCUS 1-6 LX AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS A/ BLACK 13000 MILES	£6495
04 04 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA 5 DR AUTO PAS LEATHER TONIC BLUE 24000 MILES	£6995
04 04 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER AIR/CON 27000 MILES	£5995
03 03 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/C ROSSO 53000 MILES	£4995
03 03 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 5DR AUTO PAS ALLOYS BLUE MET 44000 MILES	£3995

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07 07 NEW CORSA 1-4 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR SILVER 19000 MILES	£7995
06 06 CORSA 1-0 LIFE 3 DR AUTO PAS SILVER CD 18000 MILES	£5995
06 06 CORSA 1-0 LIFE 3 DR AUTO PAS PURPLE CD 2000 MILES	£5995
05 55 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN AUTO PAS AIR/C 3DR STAR SILVER 7000 MILES	£6995
05 05 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR STAR SILVER 24000 MILES	£6495
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01 Y CORSA 1-4 COMFORT 3 DOOR AUTO PAS SUNROOF 26000 MILES	£3695
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05 05 CITROEN PICASSO 2-0 EXCLUSIVE AUTO BLUE MET 8000 MILES	£7495
05 05 CITROEN C4 1-6 SX AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER MET 19000 MILES	£6995
04 04 CITROEN PICASSO 2-0 DESIRE AUTO SILVER METALLIC 18000 MILES	£5995

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07 07 CITROEN C3 1-6 SX AUTO PAS AIR/C GREY METALLIC 450 MILES	£7995
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06 56 CITROEN PICASSO 2-0 EXCLUSIVE AUTO SILVER 5000 MILES	£8995
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05 05 CITROEN C4 1-6 SX AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER MET 19000 MILES	£6995
04 04 CITROEN PICASSO 2-0 DESIRE AUTO SILVER METALLIC 18000 MILES	£5995

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04 54 LAND ROVER FREELANDER 1-8 XEi BLACK AIR/C 5 SPEED 38000 MILES	£6995
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DAIHATSU

07 07 DAIHATSU SIRION 1-3 SE PAS AIR/C MET GOLD 6000 MILES	£6995
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CHRYSLER

06 06 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER 5DR TOURING SILVER BIRCH 6000 MILES	£7995
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MAZDA

08 57 MAZDA 3 TS 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/C ICE BLUE 6000 MILES	£8995
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SKODA

08 08 SKODA ROOMSTER 2 AUTO PAS AIR/C MET GREY 450 MILES	£9995
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HONDA

06 56 HONDA JAZZ 1-4 SE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS 7000 MILES	£9995
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07 07 HYUNDAI WHICH ALL HAVE THE BALANCE OF MANUFACTURERS WARRANTY FOR 5 YEARS	
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06 56 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1-6 GSI PAS AIR/C AUTO BLACK 16000 MILES	£6495
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06 06 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1-6 GSI PAS AIR/C AUTO MINT SILVER 10000 MILES	£5995
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05 55 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1-6 GSI PAS AIR/C AUTO SHIMMER BLUE 10000 MILES	£5995
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05 55 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1-6 GSI PAS AIR/C AUTO SILVER 24000 MILES	£4995
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TOYOTA

07 07 NEW AYGO PLUS 5 DOOR AUTO PAS AIR/C ICE BLUE 5000 MILES	£7495
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07 07 NEW YARIS T3 D4-AD DIESEL AUTO PAS CRYSTAL SILVER 5000MILES	£7995
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05 55 COROLLA 16 T2 AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR GREY 12000 MILES	£5995
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05 55 COROLLA 16 T2 AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR GREY 14000 MILES	£5995
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USED CAR ROUND-UP:

OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

FIAT PANDA



FIAT'S five-door city car shows a space-efficient interior does not have to result in a utilitarian exterior. The compact Italian is also decent to drive, cheap to insure and costs peanuts to run. The Panda of the 80s was also cheap and cheerful, but didn't feature the cutting edge technology of its modern day counterpart. A lively turbodiesel – averaging more than 65mpg – and a rugged little 4x4 option only add to the Panda's powerful attractions.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

ROAD TAX AND FUEL SAVERS

VOLATILE fuel prices and a hike in road tax charges have combined with recession fears to force a reality check on Britain's drivers. The good news is that you do not have to buy new to slash your motoring costs, even if used prices on top economy cars have boomed as 'gas guzzler' values went bust. Neither must you give up on style; our choice here includes two real 'scrooge' options, but the MINI D can look after your wallet and street cred for a little more outlay upfront.

PEUGEOT 107



PEUGEOT'S smallest model is the best seller of a joint venture three and five-door city car project that also spawned the Toyota Aygo and Citroen C1. All come from the same production line in the Czech Republic and, with minor styling tweaks, are modern, stylish, cheap to run and reliable. Launch prices were not as cheap as expected, but robust new car sales and secondhand values indicate the public is willing to pay to save money and the planet.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

MINI D



USED values for the frugal yet lively diesel version of BMW's MINI are steep, but the rewards are worth it; the car drives well, oozes class, will save money and be worth more when you sell. The downside is a relatively cramped interior in comparison with its exterior – the antithesis of its all-British forebear – and rarity when buying. A late 'Mark II' petrol version with BMW's eco-friendly 'Efficient Dynamics' package is a possible alternative though.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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08 Reg Mazda3 1.4 S 5dr	£7,390	£11,568	£4,178
08 Reg Mazda3 2.0d Sport 5dr	£12,990	£16,624	£3,634
58 Reg Mazda5 2.0d Sport 5dr	£14,290	£16,624	£2,334
07 Reg Mazda6 2.0 TS2 [147] 5dr	£8,590	£17,930	£9,340
57 Reg Mazda CX-7 2.3T 5dr	£15,190	£24,448	£9,258
08 Reg Mazda MX-5 1.8i [Option Pack]	£11,849	£16,203	£4,354
08 Reg Mazda MX-5 2.0i [Option Pack]	£12,499	£17,181	£4,682

Peugeots

OUR PRICE WAS NEW YOU SAVE

08 Reg Peugeot 207 1.4 VTi S [95] 5dr	£7,790	£12,013	£4,223
07 Reg Peugeot 207 1.6 VTi SE [120] 5dr	£8,490	£12,622	£4,132
08 Reg Peugeot 207 1.6 HDi 90 S 5dr	£9,990	£13,039	£3,049
08 Reg Peugeot 308 1.6 VTi Sport 5dr	£10,490	£15,390	£4,900
57 Reg Peugeot 308 1.6 HDi 110 Sport	£10,990	£17,445	£6,455
08 Reg Peugeot 308 1.6 HDi 110 SE 5dr	£12,490	£18,423	£5,933
08 Reg Peugeot 308 2.0 HDi GT 5dr	£13,590	£20,186	£6,596
57 Reg Peugeot 407 2.0 HDi 136 SE 5dr	£10,190	£18,455	£8,265

Renaults

OUR PRICE WAS NEW YOU SAVE

58 Reg Renault Twingo 1.2 TCE GT 3dr	£6,999	£10,157	£3,158
07 Reg Renault Clio 1.4 16V Dynamique	£7,290	£10,437	£3,147
08 Reg Renault Clio 1.5 dCi Dynamique 3dr	£8,990	£12,201	£3,211
08 Reg Renault Grand Modus 1.6 dCi Auto	£8,090	£13,158	£5,068
08 Reg Renault Megane 2.0 Renaultsport 225	£12,890	£19,195	£6,305
08 Reg Renault Laguna 2.0 dCi Dynamique 5dr	£12,490	£17,229	£4,739
08 Reg Renault Laguna 2.0 dCi 180 GT 5dr	£14,290	£21,438	£7,148
58 Reg Renault Koleos 2.0 dCi Priviledge 5dr	£20,390	£23,367	£2,977

Other Makes

OUR PRICE WAS NEW YOU SAVE

07 Reg Citroen C3 1.6 HDi 16V Exclusive 5dr	£6,799	£13,032	£6,233
07 Reg Ford Fiesta 1.25 Style 3dr (Climate)	£5,999	£9,622	£3,623
57 Reg Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec 5dr (Climate) 5dr	£8,499	£15,045	£6,546
57 Reg Ford Mondeo 1.8 Zetec Edge 5dr	£9,750	£16,795	£7,045
57 Reg Vauxhall Astra 1.8i VVT Elite 5dr	£8,299	£17,015	£8,716
07 Reg Vauxhall Corsa 1.2i 16V Life 3dr	£6,599	£9,497	£2,898
07 Reg Vauxhall Vectra 1.8i VVT Exclusive 5dr	£6,990	£14,897	£7,907
57 Reg Vauxhall Zafira 1.9 CDTi Design	£11,999	£21,705	£9,706

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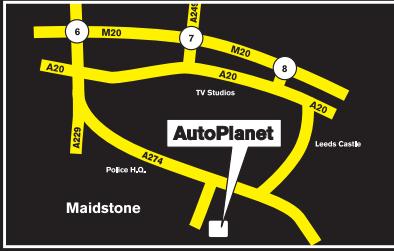
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Senior & General Appointments 63-67

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Comprehensive induction and training will be provided. Telephone enquiries and informal visits to the school welcomed. This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 30.1.2009

For further details and a job description, please contact Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Red Court Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3SP. (Tel: 01634 338224), stating the position for which you are applying.

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Closing date: 30th January 2009

For an application form please:

- Email job.applications@midkent.ac.uk
- Visit our website www.midkent.ac.uk
- Telephone the Personnel Department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine)

In all communication, please quote the post you are applying for and give your name, address and a contact number.

MidKent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and anyone applying for work with the College is expected to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

The College is committed to Equal Opportunities and to selection on merit. It welcomes applications from all sections of society. We particularly welcome and encourage applications from under represented groups including black, minority ethnic and disabled people.



KCA (UK) is an expanding and vibrant organisation providing a wide range of high quality and innovative specialist services in the drug, alcohol and mental health sectors.

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£21,244 - £27,492 + ESSENTIAL CAR USER ALLOWANCE UP TO £1,095

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Could you help chaotic injecting drug users to stabilise their use and begin shaping better lifestyles? It is a big challenge that will see you work closely with medical staff as you deliver assessment and key worker support to people accessing the substitute prescribing service.

Significant experience of working with individuals with drug related problems is desirable, along with a qualification to diploma level in a relevant area – nursing, counselling or social work for example. As for your future, there is the opportunity to make a huge impact on people's lives and help grow our services into the future working as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Ref: 544

Closing date: Friday 30 January 2009.

Interview date: Wednesday 18 February 2009 (To be held in Maidstone).

Office Assistant

£14,847 - £16,614 PRO RATA • 30 HOURS PER WEEK • THANET

You will be the first point of contact to all callers, visitors and Service Users at KCA's Thanet office in Margate. Confident in handling enquiries about the service whether by telephone, email, post or in person, you will ensure that enquiries are dealt with promptly, efficiently and courteously.

Offering support to the Administrator, you will have top MS Office skills and a 'can do' approach. You will be able to communicate with a wide cross-section of staff and external contacts in a highly professional manner. You need to be able to prioritise, work to tight deadlines and respond appropriately to referrals. Ref: 543.

If you would like to discuss this post further, please contact Sue Hamilton, Service Manager KCA Thanet on 01843 298355 ex. 217 or Christine Gordon Admin Lead on 01795 590795 ex. 2.

Closing date: Friday 23 January 2009.

Interview date: Thursday 5 February 2009 (TBC).

Application forms and job descriptions can be downloaded from <http://www.kca.org.uk/pages/vacancies.html> or email recruitment@kca.org.uk

Alternatively, you can write to KCA (UK), Dan House, 44 East Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 8AT or call 01795 590635.

KCA (UK) is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from people with experience of substance use or who have had previous problems with substance misuse.

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This post involves working waking nights, and managing a team of waking night staff.

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Valence School is committed to safeguarding and promoting every student's welfare. We expect all staff to share our commitment. The successful applicants will require an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check.

For further information and an application form, please contact Lee-Anne Fossett.

Closing date for applications is Friday 30th January 2009.

Previous applicants need not apply.

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HMYOI ROCHESTER & COOKHAM WOOD

HMYOI Rochester is a closed Young Offender Institution, housing approximately 360 18-20 year olds serving sentences of up to four years. It is situated next to HMP Cookham Wood on the outskirts of Rochester. HMYOI Rochester implemented an additional 300 bed temporary custodial facility from Summer 2008 making it one of the largest sentenced Young Offenders Institutions in the UK.

HMYOI Cookham Wood near Rochester has become a Male Juvenile Centre, accommodating 15-17 year olds, commissioned by the Youth Justice Board.

You will be required to work in Rochester and Cookham Wood and will be subject to CRB enhanced clearance.

GRADE 3 PLUMBER

£19,851 RISING TO £21,074 PER ANNUM

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HMP Blantyre House is a semi open resettlement Prison with approximately 120 male prisoners. The Prison is situated in a rural location near Goudhurst.

HMP East Sutton Park first opened as a borstal in 1946. The prison is a Grade 2 listed country mansion house overlooking the Weald of Kent and is used to hold both adult and young offender women in open conditions.

You will be required to work in both Blantyre House and East Sutton Park.

For both positions, you will have gained a recognised apprenticeship and City & Guilds ordinary certificate or equivalent qualification and have proven relevant experience. A City & Guilds advanced certificate or equivalent qualifications, Corgi, Water Supply Regulations course and Water Treatments course would be desirable. You'll work 39 hours per week excluding meal breaks and be expected to work weekends on a rostered shift pattern.

In return, you'll receive 25 days' annual leave plus 10.5 public and privilege holidays per annum and entry into the Civil Service Pension by invitation.

To apply for these posts please email kent-sussex-area-recruitment@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk

Applicants will require an email address in order for applications to be sent to them.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 8 February 2009.

For further information about vacancies within HM Prison Service and about our Prison Establishments please visit www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

Applicants will be required to declare whether they are a member of a group or organisation, which the Prison Service considers to be racist.

Part-time working or job sharing will be considered.

The Prison Service is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from candidates regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, age (subject to being within the normal retirement age for the grade), sexual orientation, disability or any other irrelevant factor.



National Offender Management Service



Career Opportunities



College

Canterbury College is an equal opportunities employer

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Director of Quality & Innovation

09/01

37 hrs per week, salary range £56,478 to £62,408 per annum

Acting Section Manager NVQs and Professional Studies, Dental, Nursing, Social Care and Counselling

09/02

37 hrs per week, salary starting £33,858 per annum. Fixed Term post ending 31 July 09

Lecturer Animal Care and Land Based

07/87

37 hrs per week salary range £18,387 - £26,363 per annum. Fixed term post ending 13 July 09

Supply Lecturers Higher Education are required in the following areas

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 - £26,363 pro rata per annum

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S/HE/TOR

Counselling (must hold relevant recognised qualification)

S/HE/COU

Early Years (to teach on Foundations Degrees)

S/HE/EY

Supply Lecturers are required in the following areas

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 - £26,363 pro rata per annum

Animal Care

S/AC

Veterinary Nursing

S/VET

Supply/Flexibank

S/HSC

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 - £26,363 pro rata per annum

Midwife (ENB 997)

Registered Nurse (ENB 998)

Mental Health Nurse (ENB 998)

To teach on Maternity Care, Mental Health and Health & Social Care courses.

Supply Lecturers (Teachers/Trainers) are required in the following areas

Various hours available, salary range £18,387 - £26,363 pro rata per annum

Level 2 & 3 Counselling

02/128

Registered Dental Nurse

09/03

First Aid Trainer

08/127

Information, Advice and Guidance

SDT2

Citizenship

TD13

PE/Sport Trainer

06/08

Infant School/Early Years

02/17

Advanced Practitioner

08/124

37 hrs per week, salary starting £33,858 per annum

HR Workforce Information Officer

09/03

37 hrs per week, salary starting £16,914 per annum.

Placement Officer

08/127

37 hrs per week, salary starting from £24,408 per annum

Service Desk Technician Level 2

S/CSA

37 hrs per week, salary starting £16,914 per annum

Trainer Demonstrator Animal Care

S/LS

18.5 hrs per week, salary starting £18,963 pro rata per annum

Resource Assistant Animal Care & Land Based

06/08

18.5 hrs per week, salary starting from £15,085 pro rata per annum

Learning Support Business

02/17

37 hrs per week, 40 weeks term time. Salary starting £16,914 pro rata per annum.

Teacher Education Administrator

S/Admin

18.5 hrs per week, salary starting £15,085 pro rata per annum

Supply Curriculum Support Assistant within the Faculty of Health, Public Service, Early Years

07/87

Various hours available, salary starting from £18,963 pro rata per annum

Supply Learning Support within Health, Public Services & Early Years

02/128

Various hours available, salary starting at £16,914 pro rata per annum

Supply Administrator with Health, Public Services & Early Years

09/03

Various hours available, salary starting at £15,085 pro rata per annum

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or call the Human Resources Office on 01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone) quoting the above reference.

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TEACHER OF BIOLOGY

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Main Professional Grade

We are looking to appoint a Scientist with an excellent degree to teach Biology in our high achieving Science Faculty. The ability to teach to A' Level is preferred. Both Triple and Double Science are offered at GCSE.

This is an excellent opportunity to develop as part of an established team with a supportive ethos.

Academic standards are exceptionally high (Ofsted 2008) and the School has acquired Investor in People and Investor in Careers status. We were identified as one of the particularly successful schools in the HMI Chief Inspector's Report for 2002-03 and we have been a Specialist Science College since September 2004.

The School has a high profile for achievement locally and nationally and prides itself on a strong record of internal professional development including a full induction in the Summer term. There is also plenty of scope to be involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Application forms and further details are available from the Headteacher's Personal Assistant, Mrs M Tong Ralphs. Completed forms should be returned by post, fax or email for the attention of **Mrs E Wilson, Headteacher**, no later than **Monday 2nd February 2009**.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer

£27,612 • 37 hours per week

Two year contract

Cohesion and Equalities is not just about monitoring, it is about action! At Swale, we see this role as being one that produces results for residents and staff, detecting and addressing exclusion and inequality whilst also using information we hold on Swale residents to tailor services and meet needs.

Swale is a growth area, part of which is in the Thames Gateway. Together with the physical growth, it is developing more diverse resident and migrant populations. This produces a set of challenges, some of which require long term planning and solutions and some which require immediate practical responses.

We are looking for a highly motivated person with a drive to get things done. Excellent project management and communication skills are important as you will need to bring together many different people across our organisation and community to effectively make improvements.

You need to be an equalities expert with a strong commitment to community cohesion and equality, be willing and able to stay informed and be aware of best practice in this field.

In addition to salary, we can offer you a generous annual leave allowance, paid bank holidays, Local Government final salary pension scheme and flexi time working for most posts.

If you would like to discuss this post further, please contact Peter Speakman on 01795 417251 or e-mail peterspeakman@swale.gov.uk

For further information contact Human Resources, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT. Telephone (01795) 417414 (24 hour voice mail) quoting ref: 206ED4.

E-Mail: hr@swale.gov.uk Website: <http://jobs.swale.gov.uk>

Closing date: 12 February 2009

Interviews: 27 February 2009



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Completed forms should be returned by post, fax or email for the attention of **Mrs E Wilson, Headteacher**, no later than **Monday 2nd February 2009**.

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Proud to set standards on international stage

EDWARDS Harvey, a PR and marketing consultancy with clients across Kent, has achieved internationally recognised quality management and customer service standards for the fourth consecutive year.

The consultancy, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, has been awarded ISO 9001:2000 accreditation for both quality management systems and customer satisfaction.

The Maidstone-based company has also been re-accredited to the OHSAS:18001 standard for health and safety management.

Managing director Pip Clarkson said: "We're proud of this achievement. By having systems and processes that meet international standards, Edwards Harvey is demonstrating its professionalism.

"We believe in doing things properly and our accreditation is the result of the hard work and dedication of our staff."

The firm is regularly listed in PR Week magazine's best-performing top 150 consultancies in the UK.

FSB backs blueprint to provide jobs bonanza

FEDERATION of Small Businesses Kent and Medway chairman Roger House has backed the organisation's blueprint for tackling rising unemployment with a plan it reckons could create 400,000 jobs.

The FSB's five-point plan identifies promoting part-time working; investing in apprenticeships; simplifying legislation; giving small businesses more opportunities to bid for public contracts; and cutting payroll taxes as the key to unlocking the challenge of unemployment.

Mr House said: "The plan is going to be crucial in creating and retaining jobs during what is going to be a challenging year.

"We are calling for the Government to help small businesses to continue to invest in recruitment and training so they can grow stronger and more competitive, creating quality jobs and doing their bit to pull the UK out of recession as quickly as possible."

The FSB has 7,000 members in Kent.

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Ideas fuelling the Kent Innovation Challenge 2009. Search 'innovation'.

Rule changes should provide the extra will-power you need

■ BY **TONY PATEY**

WHERE there's a will, there won't be any problems. So says Kent lawyer Nicola Rostron, who warns that if you're not bothered about making a legal will to cover your worldly goods, think again.

New rules coming into force on February 1 could have damaging effects on the loved ones who survive you, she says.

Ms Rostron, an associate and senior solicitor at Furley Page, which has offices in Canterbury, Chatham and Whitstable, said: "The financial hardship, not to mention fractured family relationships, that can result from the absence of a proper will should persuade people once and for all against dying intestate.

"They need to be aware of what happens to their estate on their death, particularly to some of their assets such as jointly-owned assets; pension pots and life assurance policies which may not necessarily pass as part of the estate and could need particular attention when drafting a will."

When someone dies without leaving a legal will their estate is distributed according to strict statutory rules.

Statutory legacies are paid to surviving spouses or civil partners, the amount received dependent on whether or not the deceased is survived by children, or their children; by parents; or by brothers and sisters, or their children. From February 1 statutory legacies will



DEADLY SERIOUS: Not having a legal will as new rules come into force is folly, says lawyer Nicola Rostron

increase as follows:

- Where the deceased is survived by a spouse/civil partner and children, the level is doubled – from £125,000 to £250,000.
- Where the deceased is survived by a spouse/civil partner and parents or siblings but no children, the level is increased from

£200,000 to £450,000.

If the value of the deceased's estate falls below these levels, it passes entirely to a surviving spouse/civil partner, but if it exceeds the new limits, the rules are as follows.

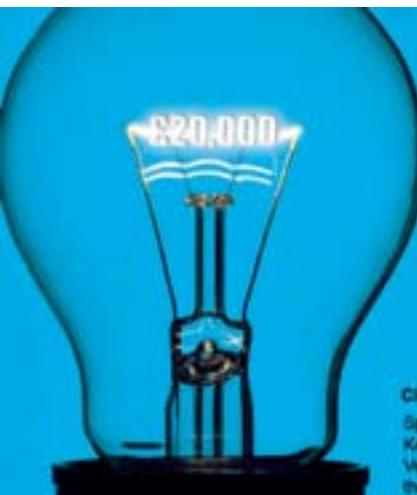
Where the deceased is survived by a spouse/civil partner and children:

- The surviving spouse/civil partner takes the personal chattels and the first £250,000 together with a life interest in half the remainder.
- The other half of the remainder passes to the children of the deceased equally (and is paid to them when they reach 18.)

The half held on life interest for the surviving spouse/civil partner is also divided equally between the children when the survivor later dies.

Where the deceased is survived by a spouse/civil partner and no children but parents or siblings:

- The surviving spouse/civil partner takes the personal chattels and the first £450,000 and half the remainder.
- The other half of the remainder passes to the parents of the deceased equally or, if they have died, to the siblings of the deceased (or their children) equally.
- Where the deceased is survived by a spouse/civil partner and no children, parents or siblings the surviving spouse takes everything.
- Where only the children survive, they take everything equally but where there's no surviving spouse/civil partner or children there's a strict list of surviving relatives. In the event that no relatives are found, the entire estate passes to the Crown.



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ON TOP: Aylesford Bulls' promotion bid continues to gather pace with their seventh consecutive win

Late winner keeps Bears on right path

GOALS from Lee Fincham and Russell McLeash saw Bearsted come from behind to beat Milton & Fulston United on Saturday.

The Bears made a terrible start, allowing Sam Teague to score inside the first minute. Fincham's strike levelled the game but Jason Batt's penalty was saved just before the break.

Despite playing against ten men, Bearsted struggled to break the visitors down, until McLeash's 87th-minute winner, which kept them seventh in the County League Division One East.

Elsewhere, third from bottom Snodland are still waiting for their first win since September after losing 2-0 at home to Lewisham Borough.

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Ashes hero offers top class coaching

BUDDING wicketkeepers have the chance to improve their game with the help of Kent and England star Geraint Jones and county coach Simon Willis.

The Kent duo are staging specialist wicket-keeping skills courses during the February half-term break.

The club are giving boys, girls and adults the opportunity to train with coaches dedicated to improving techniques and skills.

Jones said: "We'll give every opportunity for those willing to work hard and push past their potential."

For details contact Roz Franklin, 01227 456886 or ross.franklin.kent@ecb.co.uk.



Rampant Bulls close in on leaders

RUGBY

Aylesford Bulls 42 Old Dunstonians 6

place but they are just two points behind top side, Old Elthamians.

Bulls head coach Andy Dawling admitted his side are not approaching games differently due to their high league position, but a promotion bid is on the cards.

He said: "It's a very tight league and any-

one could slip up on any given week. We're taking each game as it comes but the overall ambition is to finish the season in the top two. We're just happy to get back to the league programme after a long lay-off."

This Saturday the Bulls face Old Elthamians at the Jack Williams Ground which will be their biggest game of the season.

A win for Aylesford could see them move to the top of London South East 3 for the first time this season.



EVENLY MATCHED: Roland Edge (facing the camera) celebrates after heading Maidstone United's equaliser to earn a point against the fierce rivals Tonbridge Angels

Battling Stones fight back to clinch well-earned draw

FOOTBALL

■ BY TOM HOWARD

Tonbridge Angels 2

Wescott 5 Rook 30

Maidstone starting XI



Subs used: Lacy (Peacock 55), Thompson (Blackman 87)

Maidstone United 2

Nugent 55 Edge 80



Joint-manager Alan Walker felt his side were unlucky not to come away with all three points, but was happy to have not lost.

He said: "Tonbridge playing Maidstone is a big derby and the game certainly lived up to that. With myself and Lloyd both being part of Tonbridge's past it always adds to the game."

"We started by hitting the post, but we conceded two sloppy goals and they put us under pressure. In the second half we battered them and we were unlucky not to win the game."

The club's fund-raising campaign to help build the new stadium at James Whatman Way in Maidstone, began on Saturday with 34 fans

walking from the proposed ground site to Tonbridge Angels' Longmeadow Stadium.

Walker hailed the supporters for their efforts as the club hopes to raise £740,000 to end their 21-year absence from the town.

He added: "It's fantastic. It is not a short distance to walk and everyone at the club is grateful to have supporters chipping in at this time of need. The supporters drive and camaraderie is second to none and they are a credit to the club."

• Ebbesfleet United defender Peter Hawkins has joined the club on a one-month loan from the FA Trophy champions.

Door to Ladies Tour still half open for Dani

GOLF

■ BY DAVID PRITCHARD

DANI Masters still expects to play for much of the Ladies European Tour season despite missing out on winning a card at final qualifying last week.

The 25-year-old lost her place on the elite Tour after missing the second half of last season with a back injury. The only way to regain full exemption to all the events in 2009 was to finish in the top 30 at Q-School at the La Manga resort in Spain.

After a steady first round the Maidstone golfer faded over the next two days to miss the cut. While her back did not suffer a recurrence of the injury, she admitted the tournament had come too soon.

She said: "My injuries were fine, it was the first time in months I had played injury free. But I didn't really trust my swing and I wasn't ready for a tounament

ment which meant as much as it did – I had only played one round of competitive golf in six months."

All is not lost for the Chart Hills member, who may still be able to play in the majority of events this season without exemption.

Each tournament has wildcard places for players without automatic entry and with Masters' career earnings after three seasons on Tour, plus the amount of promotional work she has done, it could see her play almost a full season.

She said: "I came off the course realising I had missed the cut and not knowing what I would do.

"When I went to sign my card the Tour officials were saying not to worry and with my record I could get by on sponsors' invites.

"If I had known a couple of months ago what I do now I probably wouldn't have even gone to Spain, so it's a great silver lining."

Masters is eligible to play in the first events of the season in Australia next month, but has put off making her return until the Turkish Ladies Open in May to concentrate on getting fit.



INVITATIONS: Dani Masters is hoping her previous efforts on the Ladies European Tour will gain her entry into tournaments this year

RUGBY



SPIRITED: Maidstone failed to make the most of a chance to win the game in the final minutes

Maidstone pressure not enough for first league win of season

Sidcup 14 Maidstone 9

DESPITE a spirited second half comeback Maidstone were unable to find the clinical finishing needed to snatch what could have been their first victory of the season.

With five minutes on the clock Maidstone took an early lead thanks to a successful penalty from Piers Francis, in his last game for the club before leaving for New Zealand.

The three-point advantage lasted less than five minutes when Sidcup were awarded a penalty in front of the posts which was converted with ease. The home side followed this up with another penalty to take the lead.

Once Sidcup were in front Maidstone's weaknesses resurfaced and they struggled to get out of their own half. With the defence under increasing pressure, Sidcup capitalised and they extended their lead with a penalty and scored the only try of the game.

Just before the break, the travelling supporters had something to cheer as Maidstone cut the deficit to eight points with a well-taken Francis penalty from 40-metres.

The majority of the second half was played with Maidstone holding the territorial advantage and threatening to score their first try of the afternoon.

Despite efforts to release centres Mark Ryan and Mark Graves, the killer pass failed to materialise and Maidstone were well contained by the Sidcup defence.

Midway through the half, Maidstone reduced the deficit to five points with another Francis penalty to put the result in the balance.

Maidstone's chances of clinching the win were increased in the final ten minutes as Sidcup were reduced to 14 men following a yellow card shown to their number eight.

With the one-man advantage, Maidstone went in search of the try which would ultimately win the game, but the Sidcup defence held firm to claim the two points.

Maidstone host Old Colfeians, who are sixth in London 2 South, on Saturday.

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Gills boss Mark Stimson talks about his January transfer targets



RECORD BREAKER: Coleman looking to build on history-making cross country title winning achievement

Coleman cruises to record

ATHLETICS

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Dover Athletic	26	23	0	3	+36	69
2 Staines Town	21	13	5	3	+19	44
3 Tonbridge Angels	25	12	7	6	+16	43
4 Sutton United	23	12	5	6	+6	41
5 Carshalton Athletic	23	12	5	6	+4	41
6 Maidstone United	24	11	4	9	+3	37
7 Canvey Island	25	10	5	10	+3	35
8 AFC Hornchurch	22	10	4	8	+2	34
9 Dartford	24	10	4	10	0	34
10 Wealdstone	24	9	5	10	+7	32
11 Hastings United	24	10	1	13	-8	31
12 Ashford Town (Mdx)	23	10	0	13	-4	30
13 Billericay Town	22	8	6	8	-7	30
14 Horsham	22	9	2	11	-5	29
15 Tooting & Mitch Utd	24	9	2	13	-7	29
16 Boreham Wood	24	8	5	11	-7	29
17 Ramsgate	27	6	9	12	-12	27
18 Harrow Borough	23	6	8	9	-15	26
19 Hendon	24	7	4	13	0	25
20 Harlow Town	22	7	3	12	-5	24
21 Margate	26	6	4	16	-19	22
22 Heybridge Swifts	22	4	8	10	-7	20

FIXTURES

Fixtures Saturday, January 24, Ryman Premier League
Maidstone United v Harrow Borough

the triumph but admitted he would like to become the most successful athlete in the competition's history.

Coleman will hope to continue his form at the South of England Cross Country Championships at Hillingdon in Middlesex on January 24.

He said: "I was aware of the record when I crossed the line. It was great as it was something I wanted to achieve.

"The event is prestigious among runners so that is what drives me on to try and win it each year.

"No one has won six times in a row before, but I want to win it nine times which would make me the most successful athlete in the competition.

"In a way I am expecting to pick up a medal at the South of England Championships if I can repeat what I did at the Kent Cross Country Championships."

The 30-year-old was delighted with

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